

Howard County Disposable Bag Fee Program FAQs

Do we need to register with the County? No, a customer number will be assigned by the Howard County Department of Finance.

Is the bag fee subject to sales tax? No

Is there an exemption for WIC and Food stamp customers? No

Are all businesses required to collect & remit the bag fees? There are three possible exemptions:

1. If you provide LESS than 1,000 disposable plastic bags at the point of sale during the calendar quarter, the Howard County Minimum Bag Fee exemption form must be submitted quarterly.
2. If you DO NOT PROVIDE disposable plastic bags at the point of sale, the Howard County Annual Bag Fee Exemption Certification form must be submitted annually.
3. If you DO NOT SELL products at the point of sale, the Howard County Bag Fee Program Exemption Agreement must be submitted one time.

Are restaurants included? Restaurants are not included in the legislation at this time; however, they are required to complete the Howard County Bag Fee Program Exemption Agreement.

Where will the quarterly return be available? There is no form, the information is collected at the time the fees are remitted to the County.

What are the quarterly due dates (to remit fees or file minimum bag exemption form)? In accordance with Sec. 20.1302 (B) (1) of Howard County Council Bill 64-2019, "A store shall remit the fees collected under subsection (A) of this section to the Director of Finance on or before the store's last business day of each calendar quarter", with the following corresponding due dates, 3/31, 6/30, 9/30 & 12/31. Accommodations should be made to comply with requirements of the law.

What are the acceptable payment methods? The ONLY form of acceptable payment is ACH (e-check) via our website, www.howardcountymd.gov/bag-fee.

What is the Trader's License Number and the Bag Fee Customer Number? The Trader's License Number is in the top right-hand corner of your business license. The Bag Fee Customer Number is issued by Howard County Department of Finance. Email bagfee@howardcountymd.gov or call 410-313-3258 for your Bag Fee Customer Number.

Can we change the mailing address to the local store's address instead of the corporate address or vice versa? All customers are created with the location address as the mailing address. The corporate address is also stored on the customer. Mailing address changes should be emailed to bagfee@howardcountymd.gov.

Can we pay up front and true up at end of quarter/year? No

Definition of disposable bag as described in Md. Code, Local Gov't § 13-1001.

(i)"Disposable bag" means a plastic bag provided by a store to a customer at the point of sale.

(ii)"Disposable bag" does not include:

1. a durable plastic bag with handles that is at least 2.25 mils thick and is designed and manufactured for multiple reuse;
2. a bag used to:
 - A. package bulk items, including fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy, or small hardware items;
 - B. contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, or fish, whether prepackaged or not;
 - C. contain or wrap flowers, potted plants, or other damp items;
 - D. contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods; or
 - E. contain a newspaper or dry cleaning;
3. a bag provided by a pharmacist to contain prescription drugs; or
4. plastic bags sold in packages containing multiple plastic bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags.

Do we need to display the signs if we do not use disposable plastic bags as defined? No

Is there a standard sign for businesses to print and display on their front door? The Howard County Office of Community Sustainability has versions available on the Live Green website <https://bit.ly/HowardCountyBagFee>.