

It pays to use recyclable shopping bags at Shoprite and Checkers

The Shoprite Group will be rewarding customers for using their newly introduced 'planet' bags in both Shoprite and Checkers stores. Made from 100% recycled and recyclable plastic, the bigger and stronger 'planet' bags retail for R3 each, but every time a customer re-uses the bag, they get 50c off their grocery purchase.



The retail group says the verified 100% recycled shopping bag is 70 microns, compared to the 24 microns for standard plastic bags, and will last for many shopping trips.

An estimated 2 million bags thrown away every minute globally, and just 5% of people re-use their shopping bags. Changing consumer behavior by rewarding customers for re-using bags is a critical part of the retailer's efforts to reduce plastic waste.

In 2013 the Shoprite Group became the first South African retailer to introduce recycled and recyclable plastic shopping bags in its Checkers stores. Today these are available at all Checkers, Shoprite and Usave stores nationally. In the past year, the group sold 700 million plastic bags made from 100% post-consumer recycled material, diverting 7,000 tonnes of plastic from landfill.

Zero waste to landfill

The Group has a zero-waste-to-landfill approach and says it's committed to reducing waste in its operations. To this end, it has:

- Recycled 3,225 tonnes of plastic and 26,859 tonnes of cardboard and white paper.
- Diverted 103 tonnes of plastic waste from landfill since February 2017 by using food-safe post-consumer waste to replace 25% of the virgin Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) material in the bottles (making it the first carbonated drink to contain this percentage of recycled PET material). The Zip Cola bottle was named Recycled Product of the Year at the 2018 Petco Awards, which recognise recycling and waste management excellence in the industry.
- Used recyclable material in almost 60% of the packaging used for fruit and vegetables including punnets, trays, bags, pockets and cartons.
- Introduced fully biodegradable and compostable avo containers for all of its Ripe & Ready avo punnets. (Products recognised as biodegradable and compostable have to be 90% biodegraded within 3-6 months of composting.)
- Packaging of all broccoli, cauliflower, mixed cauliflower/broccoli, baby marrows, patty pans, baby gems, squash variety and fruit packs will also switch to fully biodegradable and compostable containers from early November. This will reduce the retailer's use of foam punnets by 3.5 million punnets per annum.

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