

Have your say on plastic bag regulations

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has invited members of the public to comment on the intention to amend the Environment Conservation Act Plastic Carrier Bags and Plastic Flat Bags Regulations.



Photo by Anna Shvets from [Pexels](#)

“Plastic waste has not only become a challenge in diverting it from going to landfill sites, but has grown to be one of the most problematic waste streams, which continues to harm the environment.

“Plastic waste is mostly common in illegal dumps, landfill sites and rivers, and ultimately ends up in oceans, causing harm to marine life,” said Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Barbara Creecy.

The intention to amend the regulations was published in the Government Gazette 43601 (Notice no. 869) on 7 August 2020.

The amendment emanates from the review of all policies affecting plastic bags in the country. This included inputs from stakeholders directly and indirectly affected by policies relating to plastic bags and their management at post-consumer stage.

The review included determining the improvements required for a possible amendment to the Memorandum of

Understanding between government, business and labour.

It assessed whether the intended objectives of addressing the plastic bag litter problem and the promotion of the re-use and recycling of plastic carrier bags have been achieved, and if any improvements are needed.

Among the areas aimed at raising awareness and strengthening the compact between government, business and labour is the hosting of the Plastic Colloquium by the Minister in November 2019.

As a result, the department is developing a Plastics Master Plan with targets, timeframes, actions and specific goals to ensure that actions discussed at the Colloquium are implemented and that everyone responsible for the work is held accountable.

Among the most important amendments to the Regulations is the prohibition of the manufacture, trade and distribution of domestically produced and imported plastic carrier bags and plastic flat bags that do not meet outlined specifications for use within South Africa.

The proposed amendments focus on 'post-consumer recycle' material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product.

The amendments also state that plastic carrier bags and plastic flat bags must be made from a minimum of 50% post-consumer recycle from 1 January 2023, 75% of recycled materials from 2025 and must comprise 100% post-consumer recycle from 2027.

In terms of the amendment, any person who contravenes the regulations could face a fine not exceeding R5 million or five years imprisonment.

In the case of a second or subsequent conviction, the person could be imprisoned for up to 10 years or face a R10 million fine.

Members of the public are invited to submit their comments by 7 September 2020.

Written representations or objections to the proposed amendments can be sent to the following addresses:

By post to:

The Director-General:

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

Attention: Ms Pamela Nxumalo

Private Bag X447

Pretoria

By hand can be delivered at: (Attention: Ms Pamela Nxumalo)

Environment House, 473 Steve Biko Road,

Arcadia,

0083

Please note that anyone entering the department's building will be subjected to Covid-19 procedures.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, delivering comments by hand at the department is being discouraged.

Comments can be emailed to: pnxumalo@environment.gov.za

To access the gazette, members of the public can [click here](#).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>