

From 1 July, don't forget your re-usable bags

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Ashburton District Council is reminding residents and local businesses that single use plastic shopping bags will no longer be permitted from 1 July, and people will need to remember their re-usable bags at the checkout.

The Government's ban on single use plastic bags through its Waste Minimisation (Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2018 will come into effect on Monday 1 July.

The ban will mean retailers across the country will be unable to give away plastic bags (under 70 microns in thickness) for customers to carry their purchases.

The impending ban was announced in December last year, providing businesses with time to deplete some of their plastic bag stocks, however Council Service Delivery Group Manager, Neil McCann says there are options for those who still might have single use plastic bags left.

"Local businesses will be able to drop their excess bags off at the Ashburton and Rakaia Resource Recovery Parks, free of charge, and a soft plastics bin will also be available at the Methven Recycling Drop Off Facility. All bags dropped off will be stored and then recycled.

"With less plastic bags in circulation, there would be less soft plastics being dumped or ending up in landfills, which will be a good outcome for the environment."

The Government reports that the new regulations will apply to all businesses in New Zealand who sell goods. This includes sales directly to consumers, business-to-business transactions and online sales. They also apply to small produce markets and retail stores, through to large department stores and supermarkets, and both profit and not-for-profit organisations.

The ban includes biodegradable, oxo-degradable and compostable plastic bags, as New Zealand does not yet have the facilities available to effectively process these products as intended.