

NIVO ASSIST

BRIEFING DOCUMENT – No. 23

ENGLAND BAN ON SINGLE USE PLASTIC STRAWS, STIRRERS AND COTTON BUDS FROM 1ST OCTOBER 2020

Business guidance

Straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers ban: businesses' responsibilities

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From:

[Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)

Applies to:

England

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From 1 October 2020, you must not supply or sell single-use plastic:

- straws and cotton buds to end-users in England (you can continue to supply single-use plastic straws and cotton buds to other businesses)
- drink stirrers to end-users and businesses in England

The ban applies to all businesses that supply these products, including manufacturers and retailers.

If you do not stop selling or supplying these items, you could be fined. Your local authority will set the fine.

If you bought them before 1 October 2020, you can continue to supply or sell leftover supplies of single-use plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers until 1 April 2021.

If you bought them after 1 October 2020, you must not supply:

- plastic straws or cotton buds to end-users
- drink stirrers to any customers

After 3 July 2021, you must not supply drinks products with single-use plastic straws attached to the packaging.

A single-use plastic:

- straw is made wholly or partly from plastic and is not designed or intended to be reused
- cotton bud is a rod made wholly or partly of plastic with cotton wrapped around one or both ends and is not designed or intended to be reused
- drink stirrer is made partly or wholly of plastic and is designed and intended for stirring drinks

ALTERNATIVES TO SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

You can still supply and sell:

- single-use straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers made from other materials
- reusable alternatives

Some paper straws contain adhesives containing plastics within the inner lining of the straws. These are an acceptable alternative to plastic drinking straws.

EXEMPTIONS TO THE BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS

There are some exemptions to the ban on supplying plastic straws. This is so that disabled people or those with accessibility needs can still use them.

Registered pharmacies exemption

Registered pharmacies can supply single-use plastic straws. Pharmacies must not:

- display straws to customers
- advertise single-use plastic straws to customers in store - pharmacies can advertise them online

Catering establishments exemption

Catering establishments can supply single-use plastic straws with food and drink for immediate consumption, but must:

- keep straws where customers cannot see them or help themselves to them
- only give straws to customers that request them
- not offer them to customers either verbally or in writing

A catering establishment is any of these businesses that supply food or drink ready for consumption without further preparation:

- restaurant
- canteen
- club
- public house
- similar establishment including a vehicle or a fixed or mobile stall

Medical devices and purposes exemption

You can supply single-use plastic straws for use as a medical device or for medical purposes, including:

- preventative medicine
- medical diagnosis
- medical research
- providing medical care and treatment

Packaging exemption

You can supply single-use plastic straws that are used as packaging. For example, some medicines are dispensed through a straw.

Care homes, prisons, schools and early years providers exemption

You can supply single-use plastic straws in:

- care homes
- premises used for early years provision
- schools
- prisons or other places of detention

Where possible, these establishments should find alternatives to single-use plastic straws.

EXEMPTIONS TO THE BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC COTTON BUDS

There are some exemptions to the ban on supplying single-use plastic cotton buds, for medical or scientific reasons.

Medical devices and purposes exemption

You can supply single-use plastic cotton buds for use as medical devices or for medical purposes including:

- preventative medicine
- medical diagnosis
- medical research
- providing medical care and treatment

Forensic purposes exemption

You can supply single-use plastic cotton buds to forensic service providers.

Scientific purposes exemption

You can supply single-use plastic cotton buds for scientific purposes, including diagnostic, educational or research purposes.

GETTING INSPECTED

Your local authority will inspect you to check you are following the law. Inspectors can:

- visit your shop or store
- make test purchases
- speak to staff
- demand records

Inspectors can order you to cover the cost of the investigation if you break the law.

IF YOU DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE BAN

Your local authority must publish details of fine levels, and when it will impose them, on its website.

APPEALS AND OBJECTIONS

You can object within 28 days of receiving a fine. The fine or letter will tell you how to do so.

You can appeal a penalty if you feel your:

- fine was wrong, unreasonable or based on an error
- non-monetary requirement is unreasonable
- variable amount penalty is too high

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/straws-cotton-buds-and-drink-stirrers-ban-rules-for-businesses-in-england>