

## Special Circular (14)



# Full Implementation of the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging



### Background

Since **1 April 2015**, the Plastic Shopping Bag (PSB) Charging has been fully implemented in Hong Kong to promote reduction in the use of PSBs.

### Scope

The PSB Charging covers **all sellers with retail sales of goods** in Hong Kong, irrespective of scale of operation and business nature. Except for the situations where there is exemption, the seller must charge the customer an amount not less than 50 cents for each PSB provided, and must refrain from offering any rebate or discount to the customer with the effect of directly offsetting the PSB charge or any part of that amount. The PSB charge is to be retained by the seller. Seller who provides PSB in contravention of the law will be subject to a **fixed penalty of \$2,000**.



### Bags Subject to Charge

All bags that are made **wholly or partly of plastic**, irrespective of whether there is a carrying device, are subject to charge. **Paper bags with plastic lamination or component and non-woven bags (commonly known as environmental bags)**, are also covered.



(Sellers can check with suppliers or manufacturers to ascertain whether bags distributed contain plastic materials.)

### Exemption arrangements

Under the PSB Charging, the following uses of PSBs can be exempted from the charging requirements:

#### 1. PSB used for food hygiene reasons

In order to address food hygiene concerns, the use of PSBs to carry only foodstuff without packaging or not in airtight packaging can be exempted. Furthermore, the use of PSBs to carry frozen/ chilled foodstuff to segregate the condensation of water vapour from other goods can be exempted.



Foodstuff without packaging



Foodstuff in non-airtight packaging



Frozen/ Chilled foodstuff



#### 2. PSB used for packaging

PSBs used for prepackaging and have been sealed before they are delivered to the retailer can be exempted. Examples are detergents value pack and toilet paper rolls in packaging bag. PSBs forming part of the goods, for example, packaging bags for magazines and shirts, and cooler bags provided for containing ice-cream can also be exempted. **However, additional PSBs provided to contain these packaged products are required to be charged.**



#### 3. PSB provided with the services

PSBs provided with the service tendered, without involving the retail sale of goods, can be exempted. Examples are PSB provided by medical laboratory for carrying x-ray report and PSBs provided with medical consultation for containing medicines.



## Common Sales Promotions in Exhibitions

### 1. Gift with purchase

Exhibitors must charge the customer not less than 50 cents for the PSB provided to contain the gift, which is given out in connection with retail sale of goods (e.g., upon certain amount of purchase or purchase of specific item(s)). If the gift itself is a bag with plastic, such as non-woven environmental bag, it has to be charged for not less than 50 cents and cannot be given out as a free gift.



### 2. Lucky bags

If exhibitors use a plastic bag to bundle up products for sale, or allow customers to choose the products to put in a plastic bag, this bag has to be charged for not less than 50 cents.



### 3. Sets

If exhibitors bundle a plastic bag together with other products for sale as a set, exhibitors should list out the price of the bag clearly (e.g. products \$100, bag \$5, set price \$105). In addition, the purchase of shopping bag should be optional for customers. Customers may return the plastic bag and request for a refund. Therefore, exhibitors should formulate relevant refund policy and inform customers clearly of the refund policy to avoid confusion.



## FAQs for Exhibitors

**Q 1:** Are the PSBs provided during exhibitions subject to the PSB charge?

**A 1:** Whether PSBs distributed during exhibitions are subject to PSB charge or not depend on if there is a retail sale of goods. If retail activities are involved (e.g. Book Fair, Food Expo), the exhibitor (both local and overseas) must charge the customer an amount not less than 50 cents for each PSB provided to the customer according to the legislative requirements, except for situations where there is exemption. If only wholesale with no retail activities are involved during the exhibitions, the PSBs distributed are not subject to charge. Nevertheless, based on the "Use less, Waste less" principle, exhibitors are encouraged to minimize the use of PSBs under any circumstances.

**Q 2:** Are the PSBs distributed outside the exhibition booths (e.g., at the entrance of the exhibition hall, on the footbridge) subject to the PSB charge?

**A 2:** If there is a sale by retail of goods to a person, the PSB provided in connection with the sale of goods is subject to charge, regardless where the bags are provided. Example: An exhibitor distributes PSBs outside the exhibition hall. If a person obtained a PSB and then shopped at the exhibitor's booth, the exhibitor will have to charge the person not less than 50 cents for the PSB provided previously. We recommend that exhibitors, in particular those with retail sales, do not distribute PSBs for promotion to avoid potential violation of the legislative requirements.



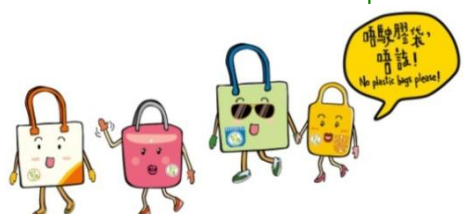
### Do's

- Always ask if customers need a PSB before distribution and suggest them to BYOB
- Reduce the use of PSBs by making the best use of the volume of PSBs
- Always charge at least 50 cents for each PSB provided unless it is exempted
- Issue a receipt for the PSB charge
- Provide suitable staff training to ensure smooth operation and proper compliance
- Keep a record of the PSB charge collected and number of PSBs distributed as far as possible



### Don'ts

- Do not provide any discount or rebate to offset the PSB charge
- Do not hand out more PSBs than necessary, charged or otherwise
- Do not distribute any PSB containing both exempted and non-exempted items without the PSB charge



For details about the PSB Charging, please visit our dedicated website:

[http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/psb\\_charging/](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/psb_charging/)

For enquiry about the PSB Charging, please contact the Environmental Protection Department at:

Hotline: 2835-1124

Email: [psb@epd.gov.hk](mailto:psb@epd.gov.hk)





# 全面推行塑膠購物袋收費

## Full Implementation of the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging



**全面推行**  
Full Implementation  
2015.4.1

### 業界參考錦囊

#### Reference Guide for Retailers

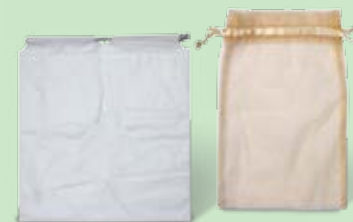


## 需要收費的袋

### Bags Subject to Charge



有手挽的膠袋  
Plastic bags with handle



有攜帶繩索或帶條的膠袋  
Plastic bags with carrying string or strap



有手挽孔的膠袋  
Plastic bags with handle hole



有塑膠薄面或塑膠成分的紙袋  
Paper bags with plastic lamination or plastic components



有打孔虛線可撕開成手挽孔的膠袋  
Plastic bags with perforated line for tearing out handle hole



以塑膠製造的不織布袋，亦稱「環保袋」  
Non-woven bags, commonly known as environmental bags, which are made with plastic



平頭膠袋  
Flat-top bags

## 給業界的七項建議






### 7 Tips for Retailers

- 1** 如適當可建立一個貨品清單，以識別豁免及非豁免貨品  
Establish a product list and differentiate exempted items from non-exempted items, where applicable
- 2** 在店舖內的當眼位置清楚標明貨品的價格及折扣標籤  
Set up and display clear price label and discount label at the prominent area of the outlet
- 3** 把膠袋收費納入在收銀系統及收據內，並且不給予膠袋收費任何折扣  
Incorporate the PSB Charge into the cashier's system or receipt and exclude it from any discounts
- 4** 向供應商或製造商查詢所派發的購物袋是否含塑膠物料，從而確定是否屬於膠袋  
Check with suppliers or manufacturers to ascertain whether bags distributed contain plastic materials and hence belong to PSBs
- 5** 加強培訓員工以確保運作順暢及遵守有關規定  
Provide suitable staff training to ensure smooth operation and proper compliance
- 6** 預先張貼及展示適當的宣傳物品以提醒顧客膠袋收費即將實施  
Display appropriate publicity materials in advance to remind customers the imminent implementation of the PSB Charging
- 7** 若有任何關於實施膠袋收費的問題，可參考環保署的網頁或聯絡環保署  
Make reference to EPD's website or contact EPD should there be any issues related to implementation of the PSB Charging




## 運作指引

### Do's and Don'ts for Operation

#### 應做的事項 Do's

-  先詢問顧客是否需要膠袋才派發，並建議顧客自備購物袋  
Always ask if customers need a PSB before distribution and suggest them to BYOB
-  盡量把豁免貨品放進同一個膠袋，以減少使用膠袋  
Always reduce the use of PSBs and put all exempted items into the same PSB as far as practicable
-  除非只用於盛載豁免貨品，否則就每個所提供的膠袋收取不少於5角的款額  
Always charge at least 50 cents for each PSB provided unless it is exempted
-  為顧客提供有顯示膠袋收費的收據  
Issue a receipt for the PSB charge particularly if requested by the customer concerned
-  盡可能保存交易紀錄以記載膠袋的派發量及收取的膠袋收費  
Keep a record of the PSB charge collected and number of PSBs distributed as far as practicable

#### 不應做的事項 Don'ts

-  切勿向顧客提供折扣或回贈以抵銷膠袋收費  
Do not provide any discount or rebate to offset the PSB Charge
-  切勿過量發放膠袋，不論膠袋需要收費與否  
Do not hand out more PSBs than necessary, charged or otherwise
-  切勿向顧客提供沒有收費的膠袋以盛載混合豁免及非豁免的貨品  
Do not distribute any PSB containing both exempted and non-exempted items without the PSB Charge

