

Taiwan to ban 80,000 stores from offering free plastic bags

Taiwan is extending the plastic ban to more stores. The ban, which aims to reduce plastic bag use by 1.5 billion per year, will be implemented starting January 1, 2018.

Pharmacies, medical equipment stores, retailers of computers, consumer electronics and communications products, book and stationery stores, laundries, beverage stores, and bakeries will be prohibited from offering free plastic bags to customers, or will risk a fine of NT\$1,200 (US\$39) to NT\$6,000, according to Focus Taiwan News Channel citing Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration (EPA).

In addition, only government-certified garbage bags, which can also be used as shopping bags, can be sold in hypermarket, supermarket, and convenience stores in cities such as Taipei and New Taipei.

The plastic ban will also cover other products such as shampoos, shower gels, facial cleansers, soaps, scrubs and toothpastes. Manufacture and importation of such items that contain plastic particles will be also prohibited starting January, and their sale in Taiwan from July 1 that year.

The ban, which has been in place in certain government and private establishments since 2002, has resulted in a supply decrease of 2 billion plastic shopping bags per year.