

"We Have Tomorrow – Bright Before Us, Like A Flame." *Langston Hughes*



LKPD TRAINING ACADEMY

The 46th Basic Training Academy for the Lawrence Kansas Police Department (LKPD) was sworn in on January 8th. This latest group of recruits is working hard to complete a rigorous 18-week course of classroom learning and tactical and endurance training. After spring graduation, field training officers on the streets take over for 16 weeks to help new officers learn how to best keep our Lawrence community safe and secure.

OUR MISSION

We create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home.

City information is available at lawrenceks.org and on cable Channel 25.

The Flame is published by the City of Lawrence, 785-832-3000



Ready for reusables? We've tote-ally got this!

We're excited to improve the long-term health of our natural environment by encouraging the switch to reusable bags! Starting March 1, City Ordinance No. 9996 goes into effect.

On Friday, March 1, City Ordinance 9996 – more simply known as the reusable bags ordinance – goes into effect. The ordinance prohibits establishments in Lawrence from providing single-use disposable plastic bags to customers at the point-of-sale.

The reusable bags ordinance is the first of its kind in Kansas and it reflects our community-wide commitment to protecting and restoring our ecosystem to make it healthier and more balanced for future generations.

"The switch to reusable bags is one of the easiest every day changes that anyone can make to improve our natural environment," said Kathy Richardson, Sustainability Director.

"We're excited Lawrence is leading the way for our state and can serve as an example of how a change of this magnitude is possible with community partnerships and a commitment to environmental sustainability."

There are several alternatives available to single-use disposable plastic bags, including:

- Reusable bags that are made of nylon, cotton, cloth, polyester, or another material that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuses.
- If reusable bags are made of plastic, these must contain at least 40% post-consumer recycled content and measure at least 4.0 mils in thickness. Plastic reusable bags must be labeled with the post-consumer recycled content percentage, the mil thickness, and the word "reusable" on the bag.
- Paper bags containing at least 40% post-consumer recycled content. The single-use disposable paper bags must be labeled with the post-consumer recycled content percentage.

More information on the ordinance, including what is exempt, is on our website at PlasticFreeLawrence.org.

Check out the back page of *The Flame* for FAQs related to Ordinance No. 9996.

READY FOR REUSABLES?

FAQs about City Ordinance 9996

So you've heard about the reusable bags ordinance but have questions about how it's all going to work. We're here to help! Below are the answers to the most frequently asked questions that we've received.

Why are single-use plastic bags harmful?

It's estimated that Lawrence residents use and discard between 29 and 36 million single-use disposable plastic bags every year. The use of these bags has significant global environmental consequences, including the overuse of natural resources and the generation of dangerous greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, single-use plastic bags...

- Are frequently ingested by animals, which contributes to animal morbidity and mortality
- Degrade into microplastics that subsequently contaminate our food and water supplies
- Are difficult to recycle and end up contaminating material that is processed through the City's recycling and composting programs
- Create a burden on the City's solid waste disposal program, which increases the cost of that service for Lawrence residents
- Pollute the City's streets, sidewalks, open areas and waterways, which has a negative effect on the health, safety and welfare of the environment, as well as its aesthetics

Can I pay a fee to continue using single-use plastic bags?

No. Establishments are prohibited from providing single-use plastic bags, regardless of whether they would be free or offered at a cost to the customer.

While a previous version of Ordinance No. 9996 included a provision noting that plastic bags could still be provided by establishments if they charge \$0.15 for them, that provision was not included in the adopted version of the ordinance.

Will customers be punished if an establishment provides single-use plastic bags?

No. Customers will not be subject to fines if they are given a single-use plastic bag by an establishment. The ordinance is drafted to hold the establishments providing the goods – not the customer – responsible for upholding the prohibition of single-use disposable plastic bags.

Can I use plastic bags to pick up my pet's waste?

Yes. You can continue to use single-use plastic bags in your possession. You'll also still be able to purchase packages of plastic bags that can be used to pick up pet waste.

How will the City enforce the plastic bag mandate?

The ordinance will be enforced by City of Lawrence staff. Any violation of the ordinance by an establishment will result in a municipal offense for the person who owns, manages, operates or otherwise controls the establishment.

If the person who owns, manages, operates or otherwise controls an establishment continues to violate Ordinance 9996 after an initial warning, and if the person is found guilty or enters a plea of no contest, they will be subject to the following punishment:

- A maximum fine of \$100 upon first conviction
- A maximum fine of \$200 upon the second conviction, if it occurs within one calendar year of the first conviction
- A maximum fine of \$500 upon the third or any subsequent conviction, if it occurs within one calendar year of the first conviction

What do I do with single-use plastic bags that I already have in my possession?

Consumers: You're welcome to continue using single-use plastic bags already in your possession.

If you no longer want a single-use plastic bag and can recycle it, please do so. Single-use plastic bags are not accepted in City recycling carts but many local grocery stores have plastic bag recycling collections. You can see a full list on the City's online recyclable materials directory: lawrenceks.org/swm.

Businesses: As of March 1, 2024, establishments will no longer be permitted to distribute single-use plastic bags and non-compliant paper bags. Chain stores with outlets outside of Lawrence can ship any remaining bag inventory to other outlets. Retailers may also consider recycling their remaining plastic bags or donating them to nonprofits that may have use of them.

You can find more information online at PlasticFreeLawrence.org.

A Place for Everyone

In January, the City of Lawrence joined Douglas County and other community partners to present A Place for Everyone, our plan to end chronic homelessness in our community.

Through A Place for Everyone, we're working to reach functional zero for Douglas County, which means homelessness is a rare and brief occurrence. Our plan is focused on goals in five work areas that are being addressed:

- Equity and Inclusion
- Affordable Housing
- Supportive Housing
- Systems
- Emergency Shelter and Services

At the City of Lawrence, we've taken leadership roles in the Affordable Housing and Emergency Shelter and Services work areas. Our community partners, including Douglas County, the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition and others, are leading the way in the three other work areas.

With affordable housing, our goals are to increase the amount of affordable rental and homeownership properties and improve access to affordable housing that already exists. That keeps people in Douglas County who struggle with housing affordability from plunging further into housing instability.

With emergency shelter and services, our goals include increasing available emergency shelter capacity with innovative solutions like The Village and developing a street outreach team to serve individuals, including women and children.

With the combined efforts of more than a dozen agencies working together, we will end chronic homelessness in our community.

Find more detailed information on A Place for Everyone at dgcoks.org/aplaceforeveryone.

