



Health Department

210 Central Street, Hingham, MA 02043

<https://www.hingham-ma.gov/health>

781.741.1466

Hingham Water Bottle Ban

Frequently Asked Questions for Businesses

What does the bylaw say?

The bylaw makes it unlawful for commercial businesses to **sell** non-carbonated, unflavored drinking water in single-use plastic bottles of less than one gallon in the Town of Hingham, beginning January 1, 2024. There are no restrictions on residents' personal use of these products within town.



What can businesses sell instead?

Businesses can continue to sell water in single-use aluminum bottles or cans, glass bottles, boxes, or any other non-plastic packaging. The most eco-friendly choice is an aluminum bottle or can that can be reused and recycled. Businesses can also continue to sell water in plastic packaging larger than one gallon. Please note that Hingham does NOT currently offer recycling options for boxed water.

What is the penalty for non-compliance?

Stores or people who sell this product will be subject to the following:

- First violation - written warning
- Second violation - \$100 fine
- Third violation - \$200 fine
- Fourth & subsequent violations - \$300 fine



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Who else is doing this?

Twenty-four other Massachusetts communities already have similar bylaws in effect, including fifteen communities on Cape Cod and all of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

How does this bylaw align with Hingham's goals?

Hingham is an environmentally-conscious community. The recently revised Master Plan lists protecting the environment and preparing for climate change as a top goal. In 2021, the Town adopted a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2040 and has since released a Climate Action Plan, which includes calls for restricting single use plastics, such as water bottles.

But don't residents recycle their bottles?

Estimates vary, but it is believed that less than 20% of plastics will actually be recycled. The rest will be landfilled, burned, or end up as litter on land or in the ocean. When plastics are recycled, they almost always require the addition of new "virgin" plastic, which requires the extraction of fossil fuels, before they can be made into a new product. Producing products with recycled plastic is also more expensive than using new plastic, further discouraging this type of production. Aluminum, on the other hand, has a high recycling rate and can also be safely reused.

Why don't we ban all single-use plastic bottles?

According to the United Nations, 91% of all plastics produced are for single use, items used once then thrown away. Since 2010, yearly water bottle consumption in the United States has grown by 40%. Single-use plastic water bottles are replaceable and serve as a first step toward Hingham's net zero goals. The best alternative is a refillable water bottle, and water is easily accessible, safe, and available through hydration stations, bubblers, and the tap.