

China Released Plan to Cut Plastic Use by 2025

On January 19th, 2020, China released an ambitious plan to ban or significantly reduce the production and use of plastic products in the next five years to control pollution.

The country will gradually ban or restrict the production, sale and use of certain plastics while promoting their degradable, recycle-friendly alternatives, according to the document issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

By 2025, China expects to effectively control plastic pollution, substantially reduce the amount of plastic waste in landfills of key cities, establish a complete plastics management system and make progress in the development of alternative products, said the document.

The production and sale of single-use foam plastic tableware and plastic swabs will be banned by the end of 2020. For daily chemicals containing plastic microbeads, production will be banned by 2020 while sale will be stopped by 2022.

The document also reiterated prohibitions on the production and use of thin plastic bags and polyethylene agricultural films, as well as on the production of plastic products with medical waste and imports of plastic waste.

The document set step-by-step timelines for the next five years to reduce the use of single-use, non-degradable plastics and parcel packaging.

For instance, non-degradable single-use plastic straws will be banned by the end of 2020, while non-degradable single-use plastic tableware will be banned from dining-in in cities. By the end of 2022, the ban on plastic tableware will be extended to dining-in in counties.

By the end of 2025, the use of non-degradable single-use plastic tableware for take-out in cities should be cut by 30 percent, according to the document.

Moreover, all hotels and guesthouses should stop using single-use plastic wares by 2025, while postal and express service outlets should cease using non-degradable plastic packaging, plastic tape and single-use plastic woven bags.

In the meantime, China will encourage the use of alternative materials such as non-plastic products and degradable shopping bags and urge efforts in the recycling and disposal of plastic wastes, the document said.

On April 10th, 2020, NDRC issued *Catalogue of Plastic Products Prohibited and Restricted from Production, Sale and Use (Draft for Comments)*, which prohibit the use of non-degradable disposable plastic tableware, straw and other plastic products. Plastic products prohibited from production and sale include single-use foam plastic tableware, plastic products made from medical waste, disposable cotton swabs made from non-degradable plastic rods, etc. Details are given in the table below.

Catalogue of Plastic Products Prohibited and Restricted from Production, Sale and Use (Draft for Comments) ❏

No.	Category	Detailed Standard	Notes
I. Plastic products prohibited from production and sale			
1	Ultra-thin plastic shopping bags with thickness less than 0.025 mm	Plastic shopping bags for carrying items with thickness less than 0.025 mm.	
2	Polyethylene agricultural plastic film with thickness less than 0.01 mm	Using polyethylene as the main raw material, non-degradable plastic film used for covering farmland ground with thickness less than 0.01 mm.	For non-agricultural purposes, non-degradable plastic film (e.g. packaging plastic film) with thickness less than 0.01 mm is prohibited for agricultural land cover.
3	Plastic products manufactured from medical waste	Plastic products made from medical waste listed in the <i>Medical Waste Management Regulations</i> .	The recycling of recyclable infusion bottles (bags) shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations of the National Health Commission.
4	Single-use foam plastic tableware	Single-use plastic tableware made of foamed plastic.	
5	Single-use plastic swabs	Single-use cotton swabs made with non-degradable plastic rods as substrate.	Excluding related medical devices.
6	Daily chemicals containing plastic microbeads	For scrubbing, exfoliating, cleaning, etc. purpose, cosmetic rinse-off products (including body soap, facial cleanser, hand sanitizer, soap, shaving foam, abrasive paste, shampoo, conditioner, makeup remover/oil) and toothpaste, tooth powder intentionally adding solid plastic particles with particle size less than 5 mm.	Plastic microbeads exclude plastic particles that are unintentionally brought in by the outer packaging of the product and without specific function.
II. Plastic products prohibited or restricted from using			
7	Non-degradable plastic bags	Non-degradable plastic shopping bags for carrying items.	Does not include plastic pre-package, roll-up and fresh-keeping bags for bulk fresh food, cooked food, cooked wheaten food, etc.
8	Non-degradable single-use plastic tableware	Non-degradable single-use plastic dining box (with lid), bowl (with lid), cup (with lid), dish, knife, fork, spoon, etc. used in catering service.	(1) By the end of 2020 and the end of 2022, the ban on the use of non-degradable single-use plastic tableware excludes catering packaging and take-out services. (2) Non-degradable single-use plastic tableware does not include single-use plastic containers for pre-packaged food use.
9	Non-degradable single-use plastic straws	Non-degradable single-use plastic straws for drinking liquid in food service.	(1) Excluding related medical devices. (2) Excluding plastic straws come with the package of milk, drinks and other food.
10	Hotels and guesthouses single-use plastic wares	Consumable plastic products used in hotels, restaurants, guesthouses, guest rooms and other places, including plastic combs, toothbrushes, soap boxes, needle and thread boxes, bath caps, washing care products containers (e.g. bath liquid bottles, shampoo bottles, moisturizer bottles, etc.), laundry bags, etc.	
11		Non-degradable plastic bags	Non-degradable plastic packaging bag for express items in delivery process.
12	Express plastic packaging	Non-degradable single-use plastic woven bags	Non-degradable single-use plastic packaging bag, made of plastic woven cloth (or plastic woven cloth with plastic film, paper, etc.), used for express items during express delivery.
13		Non-degradable plastic tape	Non-degradable plastic tape for express package sealing.