



THE PRINTED BAG SHOP

SUPPLIERS OF BESPOKE PRINTED BAGS



## WHAT IS THE CARRIER BAG CHARGE?

The key information you need  
to know about the carrier bag  
charge in England



# WHAT IS THE CARRIER BAG CHARGE

and why is it  
being introduced?

## **What is the carrier bag charge and why is it being introduced?**

The carrier bag charge has been introduced by the government across the UK to tackle the detrimental effects to the environment caused by the approximate 8 billion single use carrier bags that are distributed every year in the UK.

We're all aware of the potential negative effects that single use carrier bags can cause; these often go beyond littering and can lead to the injury of marine wildlife, and their manufacture and disposal uses valuable resources.

Whilst the introduction of the charge may seem concerning for the retailers that need to pass it on to their customers, the core reasons for it will have a positive effect on the environment around us.

Here at The Printed Bag Shop, we've compiled the information you need to know about the elements of the charge and the legislation that retailers need to act on.



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## The key points that retailers need to know:

- The 5p charge on single use carrier bags will come into force from October 5th 2015 in England
- 5p is the minimum that retailers need to charge for each single use bag they pass on to customers
- You must charge for bags if you sell goods in England, or deliver goods in England
- Only businesses with over 250 full time equivalent employees are required to charge – this means that a large amount of SMEs won't be affected by the charge! This was included so as to reduce the amount of admin needed and to help new businesses grow without worrying about implementing the charge
- To confirm the number of full time equivalent employees, businesses must divide the total hours contracted to work by all employees, by the number of hours worked by a single full-time employee
- The charge only includes bags that have an opening and aren't sealed, that are unused, plastic, have handles and are 70 microns thick or less
- This means bags made of materials such as paper, cotton or jute are not included in the charge
- There are exceptions to the charge, including bags used for uncooked meat, loose seeds, unwrapped blades, medicine
- Bags that are being used to give away free promotional material are also an exception, meaning your giveaways at events won't be affected!
- Businesses will be expected to donate proceeds of the charge to good causes, most likely ones that help initiate environmental change
- Local authorities will enforce the charge
- Retailers could be fined or made to publicise they've broken the law if they don't comply fully with requirements



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## **For every bag you charge for, you must:**

- Charge at least 5p, including any VAT
- Make every effort to ensure you're charging for self-checkout bags
- Keep reporting year's records and send to DEFRA
- Record the number of bags supplied with the charge, the gross and net proceeds of the charge, any VAT received, what you did with the proceeds and any reasonable costs.

To find out more about retailer's responsibilities with the new charge visit,

**<http://www.gov.uk/carrier-bag-charges-retailers-responsibilities>**

