

Plastic bag regulation finalized

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The final version of a regulation on the compulsory sale of plastic shopping bags at retail outlets was released in Beijing on Friday.

The Commerce Ministry, National Development and Reform Commission and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce jointly released the regulation.

From June 1, retailers could be fined up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) for providing free plastic bags to shoppers.

Under the new law, retailers will be free to set their own prices for the bags, as long as they are above the cost price.

The plastic bags must also meet national quality standards.

Also, markets face fines of up to 20,000 yuan if they fail to buy bags from legally incorporated producers, wholesalers or importers, or if they fail to obtain related certificates and record relevant data.

It will not apply to plastic packaging for raw, prepackaged and cooked food.

The regulation is mainly aimed at protecting the environment, the three government bodies said.

So-called "white pollution" has become a growing concern for the government.

The campaign against the bags led to the closure of the country's largest plastic bag-maker, which was based in Henan province, in mid-January. The factory previously had an annual output of 250,000 tons of bags, worth 2.2 billion yuan.(China Daily)

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