



Ministry of Environment and Forests
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

PLASTIC WASTE (MANAGEMENT AND HANDLING) RULES, 2011
Press Note

February 7th, 2011: The Ministry of Environment and Forests has today notified the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 to replace the earlier Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 (amended in 2003). These Rules have been brought out following detailed discussions and consultations with a wide spectrum of stakeholders including civil society, industry bodies, relevant Central Government Ministries and State Governments.

Releasing the Rules the Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr. Jairam Ramesh said “*It is impractical and undesirable to impose a blanket ban on the use of plastic all over the country. The real challenge is to improve municipal solid waste management systems. In addition to the privatization and mechanisation of the municipal solid waste management systems we must be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the lakhs of people involved in the informal sector*”

[I] Salient Features

Some of the salient features of the new Rules are:-

- Use of plastic materials in sachets for **storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala has been banned.**
- Under the new Rules, **foodstuffs will not be allowed to be packed in recycled plastics or compostable plastics.**
- Recycled carry bags shall conform to specific BIS standards.
- Plastic carry bags shall either be white or only with those pigments and colourants which are in conformity with the bar prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). This shall apply expressly for pigments and colourants to be used in plastic products which come in contact with foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals and drinking water.
- Plastic carry bags shall not be less than 40 microns in thickness. Under the earlier Rules, the minimum thickness was 20 microns. Several State Governments in the meanwhile, had stipulated varying minimum thickness. It is now expected that 40 microns norms will become the uniform standard to be followed across the country.
- The minimum size (of 8x12 inches) for the plastic carry bags prescribed under the earlier Rules has been dispensed with.
- Carry bags can be made from compostable plastics provided they conform to BIS standards.

One of the major provisions under the new Rules is the **explicit recognition of the role of waste pickers.** The new Rules require the municipal authority to constructively engage agencies or groups working in waste management **including these waste pickers.** This is the very first time that such a special dispensation has been made.

[II] Role of Implementing Authority

The Municipal authority shall be responsible for setting up, operationalization and coordination of the waste management system and for performing the associated functions, namely;

- To ensure safe collection, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of plastic waste;
- To ensure that no damage is caused to the environment during this process;
- To ensure setting up of collection centres for plastic waste involving manufacturers;



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- To ensure its channelization to recyclers;
- To create awareness among all stakeholders about their responsibilities;
- To ensure that open burning of plastic waste is not permitted.

[III] Additional Safeguards

- **No carry bags shall be made available free of cost to consumers. The municipal authority may determine the minimum price for plastic carry bags.**
- The municipal authority may also direct the manufacturers to establish plastic waste collection centres, either collectively or individually, in line with the principle of 'Extended Producers Responsibility'.
- The new Rules have stipulated provisions for marking or labeling to indicate name, registration number of the manufacturer, thickness and also to indicate whether they are recycled or compostable.