



## Committee on Rules and Ordinances Meeting

Tuesday, June 2, 2026 at 5:30 PM  
Louis P. Andrews Upper Conference Room - Third  
Floor

### Agenda

#### **ACCESS INFORMATION:**

- A. This meeting will be held on June 2, 2026 at 5:30 P.M. Location: Louis P. Andrews Upper Conference Room - Third Floor - 149 Main Street, Watertown, MA 02472
- B. The in-person meeting will also be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television) on Comcast Channel 22 or RCN Channel 13 and can be streamed online at: <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3>
- C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/89707047441>
- D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 897 7074 7441
- E. Public may comment through email: [jgannon@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:jgannon@watertown-ma.gov)
- F. Please Visit the Committee on Rules and Ordinances Webpage here: [https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/?category\\_id=92](https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/?category_id=92)

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1. Call to Order
  2. Discussion
    - A. Review proposed Skip the Stuff Ordinance training materials for residents and food establishments
    - B. Continued Discussion of a proposed Noise Ordinance
  3. Adjournment

#### **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Nicole Gardner,  
Chair

Lisa J. Feltner,  
Vice Chair

John G. Gannon,  
Secretary

## Skip the Stuff: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why did the City adopt this policy?
  - a. By only giving out single-use items when the customer asks for them, we reduce the number of items that end up unused and in the trash.
2. Can I ask customers if they want the items or do I have to wait for them to ask?
  - a. You are welcome to ask customers if they need items! You can ask a blanket question, like “Do you need any utensils with your order?” or you can offer specific items, like “Would you like a splash stick to keep your coffee from spilling?”
3. Are there any special situations I should keep in mind?
  - a. Be as customer-friendly as possible. The goal of this policy is not to deny anyone the items they need; just to reduce unwanted items. The best way for you to help your customers is to anticipate their needs, just like any service situation.

If you have the sense that a customer doesn't understand the policy or could benefit from the items for a safety reason, please suggest the items that you think they might need.

4. Can we just make these kinds of items available at a self-serve station?
  - a. Yes, that's one way to comply with the ordinance. If you do create a self-service station, though, be sure it's accessible to all. For example, ensure that wheelchair users can reach the items and that you verbally direct customers to the station rather than only relying on signage.
5. I'm interested in more sustainable packaging options for my restaurant.
  - a. While the City doesn't require or endorse any specific products, there are online sellers that offer products that you could switch to. Suggested resources include:
    - i. [FoodBiz Supply](#)
    - ii. [Webstaurant Store](#)
    - iii. [Good Start Packaging](#)

Please reach out to Erin Rathe, Senior Planner for Economic Development, if you have any questions or concerns: [erathe@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:erathe@watertown-ma.gov) or 617-972-6417

## Beginning November 1, 2026:

All single use silverware, condiment packages, and other accessory items will be provided upon request of the customer or at self-serve stations. Single use silverware, condiment packages, and other accessory items cannot be prepackaged in sets.

Additionally, full-service restaurants must use reusable food and beverage serviceware for dine-in customers.

Scan the QR code for more information



**UPDATE**

(city page URL)

## Questions?

Watertown Health  
Department  
[Health@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:Health@watertown-ma.gov)  
617-972-6446

Erin Rathe, Economic  
Development  
[erate@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:erate@watertown-ma.gov)  
617-972-6417



# Food Establishment Guide



**WATERTOWN**  
MASSACHUSETTS

Examples of single-use condiments and serviceware (straws, stirrers, lids, condiments, etc.) to be provided only upon request or self serve by customer, per City of Watertown Ordinance:

...and bundled sets are prohibited!



chopsticks

sauce packets

napkins

straws

utensils

cup sleeves



**WATERTOWN**  
MASSACHUSETTS





# Need utensils or condiments with your order? Please ask.



Single-use condiments and service ware (utensils, straws, stirrers, lids, etc.) provided upon request, per City of Watertown Ordinance.



**WATERTOWN**  
MASSACHUSETTS



#SkipTheStuff





# Need utensils or condiments with your order? Please take only what you need



Single-use condiments and service ware (straws, stirrers, lids, spill plugs, etc.)  
provided upon request or self serve by customer, per City of Watertown Ordinance.



**WATERTOWN**  
MASSACHUSETTS



#SkipTheStuff





# EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SHEET

## REMEMBER

Only provide single-use service ware and single-use condiments upon request.



## ASK

What single-use service ware and single-use condiments they need and how much.



## THANK YOU

For meeting the requirements of the Skip the Stuff Program!



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What items are considered single-use condiments?

Single-use condiment means a single-serving packet, such as:

- Sauces (ketchup, relish, mayo, mustard, soy sauce, salad dressing, hot sauce)
- Seasonings (salt, pepper, parmesan cheese, red pepper flakes)
- Spreads (cream cheese, jelly, butter)

### What items are considered single-use service ware?

Single-use service ware are all items that are designed to be used once and then discarded. This includes:

- utensils
- chopsticks
- stirrers
- straws
- splash guards
- cup sleeves

### Are self-serve stations permitted?

Yes. You may provide an area for customers to help themselves to single-use items. Please encourage them to take only what they need.

### Can I offer customers single-use items?

Yes, but please be specific and do not offer all items at once. For example, "Do you need a fork or ketchup packet with your meal?"





## Watertown City Council

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470

ORDINANCE # 44

2026 – O – 44

### SKIP THE STUFF ORDINANCE

**WHEREAS**, Implementing Watertown’s “Resilient Watertown” Climate Plan is a top priority of the City Council and the Community; and,

**WHEREAS**, a part of the effort to improve the environment is to reduce waste and,

**WHEREAS**, single use plastics have a significant impact on the environment through their carbon footprint and contribution to excess waste; and,

**WHEREAS**, the reduction of single use plastics in circumstances where they are not necessary is a valid and effective waste reduction strategy; and,

**WHEREAS**, substitution of reusable materials for non-recyclable single-use plastics will also reduce waste.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding new Title XI, Chapter 118, entitled “Skip the Stuff”, as follows:

#### Chapter 118

#### SKIP THE STUFF

##### 118.1 Purpose

The ordinance is to reduce the overall environmental impact of the City of Watertown, its residents, and its businesses. Single use plastic has a significant impact on the environment through its carbon footprint, and impact on waste systems. The provisions of this Ordinance will reduce the amount of single use plastic used throughout the City.

##### 118.2 Definitions

For the purpose of this Section 118, the following definitions apply:

A. **Condiment:** A single-use packet containing relishes, spices, sauces, confections, or seasonings, and similar ingredients, that requires no additional preparation, and that is used on food or beverages, including, but not limited to, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce,

sauerkraut, salsa, syrup, jam, jelly, salad dressings, salt, sugar, sugar substitutes, pepper, and chili pepper.

**B. Food Establishment:** A retail establishment that stores, prepares, services, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, including, but not limited to, any establishment requiring a permit to operate in accordance with the State Sanitary Code Chapter X- Minimum Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments, 105 CMR 590 (the Retail Food Code), as it may be amended from time to time.

**C. Full-Service Food Establishment:** A food establishment where customers are seated at a table and where orders are taken and served by waitstaff at the tables.

**D. Online Food Ordering Platform:** The digital technology provided on a website or mobile application through which a consumer can place an order for pick-up or delivery of Prepared Food. Such platforms include those operated directly by Food Establishments, by companies that provide delivery of prepared meals to consumers, and by online food ordering systems that connect consumers to Food Establishments directly.

**E. Prepared Food:** Food or beverages serviced, packaged, cooked, chopped, sliced, mixed, brewed, frozen, squeezed, poured, or otherwise prepared (collectively "prepared") for individual customers or consumers. Prepared Food does not include raw eggs or raw, butchered meats, fish, and/or poultry sold from a butcher case, a refrigerator case, or similar retail appliance.

**F. Single-Use:** Items designed to be used once and then discarded and not designed for repeated use and sanitizing.

**G. Single-Use Foodware Accessory:** Single-use items provided alongside Prepared Food served in single-use plates, containers, or cups, including but not limited to utensils as defined herein, tongs, chopsticks, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, cocktail sticks, and toothpicks, cup sleeves, cup trays, and food trays.

**H. Utensil:** Forks, spoons, knives, sporks, chopsticks, or other instruments used to serve food or to eat food.

**I. Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware:** Containers, bowls, plates, trays, cups, glasses, utensils, takeout containers, and other items used to contain and consume beverages and prepared food that are manufactured and designed to be washed and sanitized and used repeatedly over an extended period of time.

### **118.3 Prohibited use and distribution of single-use food and beverage serviceware.**

Food Establishments are prohibited from providing Single-Use Foodware Accessories, including in takeout and delivery orders, whether orders are placed online, via phone, or in person, except as follows:

- A. Single-Use Foodware Accessories may be provided specifically upon the request of the consumer:
- By asking directly;

- By selecting the items in an online food ordering platform; or,
  - In response to an inquiry by the food establishment.
- B. Single-Use Foodware Accessories, including plastic Utensils, may not be wrapped in plastic or offered as bundled sets.
- C. Food Establishments may have Single-Use Foodware Accessories available at self-service stations. The self-service station may include a Single Item Dispenser. These stations must comply with the Massachusetts Retail Food Code (105 CMR 590.00).

#### **118.4 Options with Online Food Ordering Platforms**

Online Food Ordering Platforms must provide Food Establishments with a method to list each Single-Use Foodware Accessory and Condiment that is offered by the Food Establishment, such that customers can specifically request the Single-Use Accessories and Condiments that they wish to have included with their order.

#### **118.5 Restrictions on Full Service Food**

Full Service Food Establishments must utilize only Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware for dine-in customers.

#### **118.6 Exemptions**

A. Food Establishment may seek an exemption from the requirements of this Ordinance as follows:

- The Food Establishment must file a request for an exemption in writing with the Director of Public Health.
- The request must state specifically which section and products they are seeking an exemption from and state reasons why application of the specific requirement would cause undue hardship.
- The Director may waive any specific requirement of this Ordinance for a period of not more than six months, but, upon subsequent applications, may extend exemptions for an additional six-month period.
- The Director will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of a written request for an exemption.

#### **118.7 Enforcement**

The Director of Public Health and/or his/her designee shall have the authority to administer and enforce this Ordinance. This Ordinance and any resulting rules and regulations may be enforced through any lawful means in law or in equity, including, but not limited to, non-criminal disposition in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 40, §21D pursuant to Chapter 35, § 35.05 of the City Code of Ordinances.

#### 118.8 Effective Date

This Ordinance will take effect six months after passage to allow time for the City Administration to conduct an education campaign focused on food establishments and consumers.

#### 118.9 Penalty

A. Any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance shall be issued a verbal and written warning for the first two offenses, then fined as follows:


- \$50 for the third offense
- \$100 for the fourth offense
- \$200 for the fifth offense and each subsequent offense

B. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense.

C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.

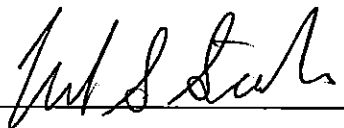
  
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Council Member

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the City Council for which a quorum was present, the above ordinance was adopted by a vote of 9 for, 2 against, and 0 present on April 28, 2026.



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Brendan T. McCarthy, Council Clerk



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Mark S. Sideris, Council President

**ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Mark S. Sideris,  
Council President

John G. Gannon,  
Councilor At Large  
Nicole Gardner,  
District A Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,  
Vice President &  
District C Councilor  
Theophilus Offei  
Councilor At Large  
Lisa J. Feltner  
District B Councilor

Caroline Bays,  
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,  
Councilor At Large  
Emily Izzo,  
District D Councilor

**Note: This draft is updated as of May 14, 2026.**

**ORDINANCE #** [REDACTED]

**2026 – O –** [REDACTED]

**WHEREAS** noise pollution is a hazard to public health, welfare, safety, and quality of life; and

**WHEREAS** a substantial body of science and technology exists by which noise pollution may be measured and abated; and

**WHEREAS** people have a right to and should be ensured an environment free from excessive noise pollution that may jeopardize their health, welfare, or safety.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of Watertown that Title IX, Chapter 95 of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, inclusive of all sections, is hereby repealed and replaced in its entirety with a new Chapter 95 as follows:

**95.01 Statement of Purpose**

- A. Noise pollution is a serious hazard to public health, welfare, safety, and quality of life. A substantial body of science and technology exists by which noise may be measured and substantially abated, and the people have a right to and should be ensured an environment free from excessive noise that may jeopardize their health, welfare, or safety, or degrade the quality of life. This chapter serves to address persistent noise pollution.

**95.02 Definitions:**

- A. Construction and demolition: Any site preparation, assembly, erection, substantial repair, alteration, destruction, or similar action for public or private rights of way, structures, utilities, or similar property, and also the use of any equipment for any processing of any material.
- B. Emergency: Any occurrence or set of circumstances involving actual or imminent physical hazard or property damage which demands immediate action
- C. Emergency work: Any work performed to prevent or alleviate the physical hazard or property damage threatened or caused by an emergency
- D. Noise pollution: A noise source which increases noise level above ambient to the level prescribed in 95.03 (A), or the level prescribed in 95.03 (B) in the case of tonal noise
- E. A-weighted decibels (dBA): The A-weighted sound-pressure level expressed in decibels
- F. Ambient noise level: The sound level associated with a given environment, being a composite of sounds from all sources excluding the alleged offensive noise, at the location and approximate time at which a comparison with the alleged offensive noise is to be made
- G. Plainly audible: any sound that is detectable and distinguishable from ambient or background noise at a specified location, such that the sound's source or character can be reasonably identified under ordinary conditions. A determination of plainly audible sound may be made by direct observation.

- H. Tonal noise: any noise that is judged by a listener to have the characteristics of a pure tone, whine, hum, or buzz

### **95.03 Prohibition of Noise Pollution**

- A. Any activity, other than those exempted by 95.03(B) below, which creates or produces sound measured at 10 dbA above ambient noise level at any of the following locations shall be deemed a violation of this section:
  - 1. The property line of any residential property.
  - 2. At least fifty feet away from the source of noise if on any publicly accessible space within a private property
- B. When a tonal noise, as defined in 95.02 (H) above, is emitted, the creation or production of noise measured at 5 dbA above ambient noise level at any of the following locations shall be deemed a violation of this section:
  - 1. The property line of any residential property
  - 2. At least fifty feet away from the source of noise if on any publicly accessible space within a private property
- C. Noise emanating from the operation of the following is exempt from the application of this section 95.03:
  - 1. Motor vehicles on a public highway
  - 2. Equipment used for construction and demolition
  - 3. Equipment used in domestic or commercial maintenance
  - 4. Noncommercial public speaking and public assembly as protected by state and federal constitutions
  - 5. An emergency or emergency work
  - 6. City-sponsored events
- D. No person owning, leasing or controlling a source of noise shall cause, suffer, allow or permit unnecessary emissions from said source of noise that causes noise pollution.

### **95.04 Construction and Demolition**

- A. All devices employed in construction or demolition which are plainly audible shall be permitted for use during the hours of 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Monday through Friday, and during the hours of 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturdays. All such devices shall be prohibited outside of such hours on Monday through Friday and Saturdays, and at any time on Sundays and legal holidays.
- B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit noise emanating from vehicles used in construction or demolition for the purposes of safety such as backup alarms on a vehicle.

### **95.05 Domestic and Commercial Maintenance**

- A. All devices employed in domestic or commercial lawn, garden, or grounds maintenance which are plainly audible shall be permitted for use during the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM on

weekdays, and during the hours of 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. All such devices which are plainly audible are prohibited from use outside of such hours.

**95.06 Waiver**

- A. The Director of Public Health or his or her designee may grant a waiver for any activity otherwise forbidden by the provisions of this chapter upon a determination that compliance in the conduct of such activity would cause undue hardship on the person or persons conducting such activity or on the community, taking into account the extent of noise pollution caused by not requiring such compliance and whether reasonable efforts have been made to abate the noise. The Director of Public Health shall establish appropriate procedures for the processing of requests for such waivers, including such hearings as he or she deems appropriate. The Director of Public Health may seek the input of the Superintendent of Public Works in waiver requests related to construction or demolition. In granting any such waiver, the Director of Public Health may impose such appropriate conditions as he or she deems necessary pursuant to this section. Copies of all such waivers shall be filed with the City Clerk and sent to all City Councilors.

**95.07 Enforcement**

- A. The provisions of this chapter may be enforced by the Director of Public Health or their designee. The provisions of this chapter may also be enforced by the Chief of Police or their designee, the Fire Chief or their designee, and the Building Inspector or their designee.

**95.08 Penalty**

- A. Pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 21D of Massachusetts General Law and the City's non-criminal disposition ordinance, any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be issued a written and verbal warning for the first offense, then fined as follows:
  - 1. \$100 for the second offense
  - 2. \$200 for the third offense
  - 3. \$300 for the fourth offense and each subsequent offense
- B. Each subsequent day or part thereof on which a violation occurs, whether continuous or intermittent, shall be considered a separate and succeeding offense.
- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.