

**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment and Forests**

18-March-2016 15:50 IST

**Government Notifies Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016**

**‘Minimum Thickness of Plastic Carry Bags Increased from 40 to 50 Microns’: Javadekar**

The Government has notified the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, in suppression of the earlier Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011. The Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar, said here today that the minimum thickness of plastic carry bags has been increased from 40 microns to 50 microns. He stated that 15, 000 tonnes of plastic waste is generated every day, out of which 9, 000 tonnes is collected and processed, but 6, 000 tonnes of plastic waste is not being collected. Shri Javadekar also said that the rules, which were admissible upto municipal areas, have now been extended to all villages. The Minister said that notifying the new Plastic Waste Management Rules is a part of the revamping of all Waste Management Rules. “This will help in achieving the vision of our Prime Minister of Swacchh Bharat and cleanliness is the essence of health and tourism”, Shri Javadekar added.

The draft rules, namely the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2015 were published by the Government of India vide G.S.R. 423(E), dated the 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 in the Gazette of India, inviting public objections and suggestions. The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 aim to:

- Increase minimum thickness of plastic carry bags from 40 to 50 microns and stipulate minimum thickness of 50 micron for plastic sheets also to facilitate collection and recycle of plastic waste,
- Expand the jurisdiction of applicability from the municipal area to rural areas, because plastic has reached rural areas also;
- To bring in the responsibilities of producers and generators, both in plastic waste management system and to introduce collect back system of plastic waste by the producers/brand owners, as per extended producers responsibility;
- To introduce collection of plastic waste management fee through pre-registration of the producers, importers of plastic carry bags/multilayered packaging and vendors selling the same for establishing the waste management system;
- To promote use of plastic waste for road construction as per Indian Road Congress guidelines or energy recovery, or waste to oil etc. for gainful utilization of waste and also address the waste disposal issue; to entrust more responsibility on waste generators, namely payment of user charge as prescribed by local authority, collection and handing over of waste by the institutional generator, event organizers.

An eco-friendly product, which is a complete substitute of the plastic in all uses, has not been found till date. In the absence of a suitable alternative, 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 plastic waste management systems.

In addition, the expected outcome from the new rules includes:

**(i) Increase in the thickness of carry bags and plastic sheets**

Increasing the thickness of plastic carry bags from 40 to 50 micron and stipulation of 50 micron thickness for plastic sheets is likely to increase the cost by about 20 %. Hence, the tendency to provide free carry bags will come down and collection by the waste-pickers also increase to some extent.

**ii) Collect back system**

The producers, importers and brand owners who introduce the plastic carry bags, multi-layered plastic sachet, or pouches, or packaging in the market within a period of six months from the date of publication of these rules, need to establish a system for collecting back the plastic waste generated due to their products. They shall work out modalities for waste collection system based on Extended Producers Responsibility and involving State Urban Development Departments, either individually or collectively, through their own distribution channel or through the local body concerned. This plan of collection has to be submitted to the State Pollution Control Boards while applying for consent to Establish or Operate or

Renewal. The producers / brand owners whose consent has been renewed before the notification of these rules shall submit such plan within one year from the date of notification of these rules and implement within two years thereafter.

The introduction of the collect back system of waste generated from various products by the producers/brand owners of those products will improve the collection of plastic waste, its reuse/ recycle.

(iii) **Phasing out of manufacture and use of non- recyclable multilayered plastic**

Manufacture and use of non-recyclable multilayered plastic if any should be phased out in two years' time.

(iv) **Responsibility of waste generator**

All institutional generators of plastic waste, shall segregate and store the waste generated by them in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, and handover segregated wastes to authorized waste processing or disposal facilities or deposition centers, either on its own or through the authorized waste collection agency.

All waste generators shall pay such user fee, or charge, as may be specified in the bye-laws of the local bodies for plastic waste management, such as waste collection, or operation of the facility thereof, etc.;

Every person responsible for organising an event in open space, which involves service of food stuff in plastic, or multilayered packaging, shall segregate and manage the waste generated during such events, in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules.

(v) **Responsibility of local bodies and Gram Panchayat**

The local bodies shall be responsible for setting up, operationalisation and co-ordination of the waste management system and for performing associated functions.

(vi) **Responsibility of retailers and street vendors**

Retailers or street vendors shall not sell, or provide commodities to consumers in carry bags, or plastic sheet, or multilayered packaging, which are not manufactured and labelled or marked, as prescribed under these rules.

Every retailer, or street vendor, selling or providing commodities in, plastic carry bags or multilayered packaging or plastic sheets, or like, or covers, made of plastic sheets which are not manufactured, or labelled, or marked, in accordance with these rules shall be liable to pay such fines, as specified under the bye-laws of the local bodies.

(vii) **Pre- registration fee**

The shopkeepers and street vendors willing to provide plastic carry bags for dispensing any commodity shall register with local body. The local body shall, within a period of six months from the date of final publication of these rules on the Official Gazette of India notification of these rules, by notification, or an order under their appropriate state statute or byelaws shall make provisions for such registration on payment of plastic waste management fee of minimum Rs. 48, 000/- @ Rs. 4,000/- per month. The concerned local body may prescribe higher plastic waste management fee, depending upon the production, or sale capacity. The registered shopkeepers shall display at prominent place that plastic carry bags are given on payment.

Only the registered shopkeepers, or street vendors shall be eligible to provide plastic carry bags for dispensing the commodities.

The local body shall utilize the amount paid by the customers for the carry bags exclusively for the sustainability of the waste management system within their jurisdictions.

The introduction of provision to collect fee from the producers, importers of plastic carry bags / multilayered packaging and vendors selling the same, will strengthen the financial status of local authorities and improve Plastic Waste Management System.

(viii) **Reuse of plastic waste**

The options on reuse of plastic in various applications namely, road construction, waste to oil, waste to energy will enhance the recycling of plastic.

(ix) **Land for waste management facility**

The responsibility to provide land for establishing waste management facility has been made to the Department with business allocation of land allotment in the State Government. This would eliminate the issue of getting land for the waste management facility.

The Ministry had initially notified the Recycled Plastic Manufacture and Usage Rules in 1999, which was mainly on manufacturing and usage of Plastic carry bags. It is specified that the minimum thickness of plastic bags should be of 20

microns. The Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 laid down certain conditions for manufacturing, stocking, sale and use of plastic carry bags and sachets, which were required to be monitored and implemented by the State Pollution Control Boards/ Municipal Authorities. It specified that the minimum thickness of plastic bags should be of 40 microns. This was to facilitate its collection and recycle. However, the implementation of these rules was not so effective because the ambit of these rules was limited to notified municipal areas whereas today, the plastic has reached to our rural areas also. There were no provisions on responsibility of waste generators. The rules did not address the promotion of conversion of waste to useful resources. Though, it provided for Extended Producers Responsibility for the establishment of waste management system, pricing of carry bags etc. those were not exercised by the local authorities as it was simply left at the discretion of municipal authorities.

To implement these rules more effectively and to give thrust on plastic waste minimization, source segregation, recycling, involving waste pickers, recyclers and waste processors in collection of plastic waste and adopt polluter pays principle for the sustainability of the waste management system, the Central Government reviewed the existing rules and drafted revised rules. Stakeholders' consultation meets were organized in New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata wherein major Associations, industrial units, experts in various fields were invited. Consultative meetings with relevant State governments, State Pollution Control Boards were also held on these draft Rules. The suggestions / objections (238 in number) were received on these draft rules and have been examined by the Working Group. Based on the recommendations of the Working Group, now, the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 have come into force.

Plastic has multiple uses and the physical and chemical properties lead to commercial success. However, the indiscriminate disposal of plastic has become a major threat to the environment. In particular, the plastic carry bags are the biggest contributors of littered waste and every year, millions of plastic bags end up in to the environment vis-a-vis soil, water bodies, water courses, etc and it takes an average of one thousand years to decompose completely. Therefore, to the address the issue of scientific plastic waste management, new regulations namely, the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 were notified in 2011, which included plastic waste management.

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