

http://www.nation.co.ke/business/Shoppers-switch-to-bio-friendly-bags/996-4075102-15ta71gz/index.html

Shoppers switch to bio-friendly bags as ban on plastic starts

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A hawker sells biodegradable shopping bags at the Nyeri matatu terminus on August 28, 2017. PHOTO | JOSEPH KANYI | NMG

In Summary

- Nearly every retail outlet in Nairobi was packaging goods in biodegradable materials as demanded by Nema.
- Shoppers had to pay between Sh5 and Sh10 depending on size of the bio friendly packaging materials.



By LYNET IGADWAH
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Retailers and shoppers generally switched to bio-friendly bags, avoiding costly confrontation with the environmental watchdog as ban on plastic took effect on Monday.

A spot-check showed nearly every retail outlet in Nairobi was packaging goods in biodegradable

materials as demanded by the National Environment Management Authority (Nema).

Unlike the polythene bags which customers used to get for free, shoppers had to pay between Sh5 and Sh10 depending on size of the bio friendly packaging materials.

The ban took effect on a day that long queues characterised counters in major supermarket chains as parents rushed in for last minute back-to-school shopping for third term.

READ: [Supermarkets charge for packaging after plastic bag ban](#)

Right from daybreak, hawkers operating on the streets of Nairobi had switched to the alternative packaging materials including travel bags and manila papers.

Under the Nema regulations, use of the polythene bags now attracts fines of between Sh2 million and Sh4 million or two years imprisonment.

On Monday, governors and conservationists welcomed the ban, saying it presented a watershed moment for environmental management in Kenya.

READ: [Manufacturers lose bid to suspend plastics ban](#)

ALSO READ: [Kenyans scramble to ditch polythene bags on first day of ban](#)

Volunteer group Greenpeace Africa said the ban on plastic bags would help mitigate health and environmental effects of the non-biodegradable materials.

“As we welcome this ban, we cannot forget the challenge that lies ahead of us in dealing with the tonnes of plastics already polluting our environment. The government should work with local communities and NGOs to look for sustainable ways of recycling plastic into usable items,” said Greenpeace Africa’s executive director Njeri Kabeberi.

Her remarks came a day after the Council of Governors said it will work with the national government to ensure total compliance on the ban.

“Citizens should use alternative bags such as the manila paper, canvas, jute and biodegradable plastics,” said CoG chairman Josphat Nanok in a statement.

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