

New Oregon business laws to know for 2020

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
EO Media Group

SALEM — Several new Oregon laws took effect with the start of the new year, including some with a direct impact on businesses.

When a new year starts, it can be easy to miss the memo on changes to the law. Ignorance of the law is not a defense for breaking it, however, so here are a few handy guidelines for 2020:

Sales tax

In July 2019, Washington stopped granting Oregonians an exemption to sales tax at the register. But as of Jan. 1, Oregon residents who have been saving their receipts can file a tax return for the amount of sales tax they paid to Washington in 2019.

To qualify, applicants must be a resident of a state that does not have sales tax, must have purchased the items for use outside of Washington, and must be requesting reimbursement for more than \$25 in taxes paid (at 6.5% state sales tax, that means spending at least \$384.62 on qualifying items). They will have to submit receipts and infor-

mation about the time and place of each purchase, in addition to proof of residency.

Each person is only allowed to apply for reimbursement once per calendar year, for taxes paid in the previous year.

According to the Washington Department of Revenue's media relations office, the necessary forms are online under the "general public" heading on their home page. Information can be found at dor.wa.gov/find-taxes-rates/retail-sales-tax/sales-nonresidents.

Plastic bags

As of Jan. 1, stores no longer give out single-use plastic bags at check-out, although bags used for meat and produce will be exempt. Stores are required to charge at least 5 cents per bag for paper, reusable bags or other alternatives.

Real ID

As of Oct. 1, 2020, regular Oregon driver's licenses will no longer be valid to board a commercial flight, enter a secure federal facility, such as a military base, or do other activities where a federally approved form of identification is required.



EO MEDIA GROUP/DAILY ASTORIAN

A plastic bag discarded near the Clatsop County Heritage Museum in Astoria.

After Oct. 1, Oregonians who want to take a flight will have to use another form of approved identification, such as a passport, or apply for a new type of driver's license called a Real ID. The state hopes to have the federally approved Real IDs available through the Department of Motor Vehicles starting in July after finishing a "major IT overhaul," according to the department's website.

Real IDs will be optional, and those getting them will be required to pay the DMV's fee for replacement of a driver's license, plus a yet-to-be-determined additional Real ID fee. The newly issued Real ID will have the same expiration date as the person's current driver's license, so people whose licenses expire soon after the Real IDs are available are advised they may want to wait until it is time to renew their license.

Should someone choose not to upgrade to a Real ID, a standard Oregon driver's licenses will still be good for activities, such as driving, purchasing alcohol, registering to vote or applying for benefits.

Employment

Employees in Oregon received a variety of new protections as of Jan. 1.

Pregnant workers are among those who receive new protections under the law. Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations, such as assistance with manual labor or more frequent bathroom breaks, to pregnant employees. They are also prohibited from denying someone employment, requiring them to take a leave of absence or otherwise retaliating or discriminating against them for requesting accommodations for their pregnancy.

Employers are required to create anti-harassment policies for their workplace, and will no longer be allowed to force employees to sign nondisclosure agreements restricting them from talking about harassment or discrimination they experienced at the company.

Minimum wage

Minimum wage will increase once again in July, as part of a law passed by the legislature in 2016 that set up regular increases through 2022. This year, minimum wage in Oregon will increase to \$12 in "standard" counties (mostly found on the west side of the state, including Clatsop), \$13.25 in metro counties, such as Clackamas and Multnomah, and \$11.50 in rural counties.



**We finance
Business Equipment
and MORE!**

Business Equipment
Business Expansion
Inventory
Fleet Vehicles
Commercial Real Estate

Plan the future
of your business,
call today!

503.861.6555
Long Beach | Ocean Park
Cathlamet | Astoria | Seaside


Bank of the Pacific
www.BankofthePacific.com

Member
FDIC
LENDER

All loans subject to credit approval. Certain fees and restrictions may apply.