

# Zero Waste: Event Planning

*Heading toward greener business is easier than you think!*

Use this guide when planning any event from an office meeting to a large public event.

## What Is A Zero Waste Event?

The main objectives of a Zero Waste event are:

- To significantly reduce the amount of solid waste generated;
- Find and use materials that can be used again for your next event;
- Recycle paper, plastic and food waste responsibly.

By planning ahead; you can find easy ways to reduce solid waste, save money and help the environment.

## Before the event:

### Catering:



1. Determine all food and serving products you will need, such as food, drinks, cups, plates, bowls, utensils, tablecloths, and centerpieces. Make sure all are recyclable, compostable, or reusable.
2. Tell the caterer that you do not want:
  - a. any single-serve packets – they are usually not recyclable or compostable (i.e. sugar, ketchup, butter in foil)
  - b. non-compostable materials (i.e. plastic coffee stirrers, tea in foil bags, small creamers, ice cream wrappers, sandwiches wrapped in plastic or in plastic lunch bags, etc.) that can contaminate the compost and recycling.
3. Request “Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified” compostable materials from your caterer or buy the amount you need.

## Bins, Signs & Volunteers:



1. Make sure that your venue has recycling and composting bins available for your event.
2. Set up a small number of stations (four stations per 200 people) and only a small trash bin for any trash.
3. Make bright recycling/compost signs and table tents and use the on bins, near plates/utensils, at bar, table tents and easels).
4. Have volunteers that can monitor bins ensure that all recycling goes to the appropriate area at the end of the event.

## During the event:

Good planning and preparation will guarantee that your event runs smoothly.



1. Put out signage. Taping actual objects to the bins is VERY helpful.
2. Check for any non-compostable materials brought by the caterer, as they often make mistakes.
3. Most importantly, staff the waste stations to ensure that compost is not contaminated.
4. Make a brief announcement about event recycling and composting (remind attendees of what can be recycled and composted).

## What can be recycled and composted?

### Compost



- ALL food waste (including grains, breads, meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables, tea bags, and coffee grinds)
- napkins & paper towels
- compostable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils
- wooden coffee stirrers e. tea bags (staples are okay) and coffee grinds
- the green compostable bags that line the compost bins

## Recycled



- plastic bottles and containers
- metal cans
- paper

To avoid contamination, put the rest in the trash.



# ZERO WASTE EVENT

**For more information on how to arrange your Zero Waste event;**

**please call the TRASHLINE (703) 257-8252**