



WORKING TOWARDS A ZERO WASTE EVENT – TIP SHEET

A. EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

1. Develop a vision statement and share your diversion goals with staff, volunteers, vendors, attendees:
 - “[Event Name] is committed to reducing its environmental impact. This year, we’re aiming to divert [50% or more] of our event waste from the landfill.”
 - “[Event Name] aims to be a leader in environmental sustainability within Calgary. This year we’re aiming for a zero waste event.”
2. Reduce print materials, print on recycled paper, and opt for electronic options to promote your event.
3. Tell event attendees about your waste reduction and diversion initiatives:
 - Make announcements throughout the day to promote your efforts and encourage attendees to visit the waste stations and learn about what goes where.
 - Have volunteers or entrance staff greet attendees and let them know about your event’s waste reduction initiatives.
 - Promote waste reduction and diversion initiatives on your event/ticketing web site or on tickets directly.
4. Use signage that is clear and customized to your event:
 - It is recommended to use the signage that is available at the City’s [website](#).
 - Alternatively, ask your waste collection service provider if they include signage of acceptable materials on their containers.
 - Use pictures of waste materials that will be generated at your event.
 - For example, food containers, napkins, and drink cups are commonly used and thrown away at festivals and events.
 - Highlight waste materials that might cause confusion for people at the event/festival.
 - Consider using signage with multiple languages, if applicable to your event.
5. Calculate your diversion rate (or obtain this from your waste collection service provider after the event) and share your success via social media, newsletter, and other post-event communications.
 - To calculate the diversion rate, divide the total amount of waste that was recycled and composted by the total amount of waste generated at the event, and multiply that by 100:

$$\text{Waste Diversion Rate} = \left(\frac{\text{Weight or volume of recycled and composted waste}}{\text{Total weight or volume of waste generated}} \right) \times 100$$

B. GARBAGE, RECYCLING, AND COMPOSTING BINS

1. Offer garbage, recycling, and compost bins at each waste station and colour code to provide a visual cue for what goes where.
 - Use black for garbage, blue for recycling, and green for compost.
2. Provide extra bags at each waste station and change bags out frequently to avoid heavy loads.
 - Be sure to use BPI-certified compostable bags for the green/compost bins.
 - Recommend using clear plastic bags for recyclables and garbage bins since this helps identify what is in the bags when they are being consolidated into larger collection bins.
3. Remove or close off any garbage bins on site that are not part of the event’s official waste stations.
4. Carefully think through the location of your waste stations:
 - Locate bins in high traffic zones.
 - Put bins where waste is most likely to be produced (e.g., near food vending stations or eating areas).

- Group bins together, creating “waste stations” where there is a garbage, recycling and composting bin co-located.
- Put bins near any closed off garbage bins – this helps to discourage their use.

C. WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES

1. Consider the specific types of waste items that your event will generate and find a waste collection service provider that can accommodate the collection of these items (e.g., certified compostable foodware, coffee cups, hazardous waste)
 - Refer to the [Directory Search Tool](#) on the City’s website for some available waste collection service providers, as well as other services.
2. Check with your collection service provider about other services they can provide (e.g., signage, bins, bags, event consulting).
3. See below for Food Rescue information.

D. VOLUNTEERS

1. Use volunteer educators at the waste stations to assist event attendees in properly disposing of their waste. This can reduce contamination and increases diversion rates.
2. Visit Calgary.ca/eventwaste to download a free Volunteer Recruitment Template and Waste & Recycling Pocket Guide.
 - If desired, contact 311 or submit a request through your Event Liaison for a training session provided by the City’s Waste & Recycling Services for the volunteer educators.

E. VENDORS/CATERERS

1. Communicate with vendors in advance of the event to determine what waste materials they will generate and address any diversion needs for unique materials.
2. Inform vendors about your waste reduction and diversion initiatives and consider making certain terms mandatory. Outline these terms in the event contract. Stipulations for vendors could include:
 - Require use of onsite recycling and compost bins for acceptable items – they cannot just use the garbage bins and must sort all waste generated into the appropriate bin.
 - Certified compostable foodware only (fibre-based or compostable plastic).
 - Confirm with your waste collection service provider that they are taking the compostable material to a facility that can process certified compostable plastics. If not, consider telling vendors that compostable plastic items will not be permitted at the festival to prevent the compost waste stream from being contaminated.
 - No foam containers or packaging (including Styrofoam).
 - No single-use plastic bags for customers.
 - Straw-free.
 - Bulk condiments only (no single-use packets).
 - Provision of a compost and recycling bin at their stall.
3. Notify vendors and/or caterers that surplus edible food is donatable and provide information from the food rescue organization to ensure that surplus edible food is properly donated.
4. Visit the City’s [website](#) to download a free Food Vendor Memo Template.
5. Consider incentives to improve vendor compliance such as:
 - Charging a refundable waste management deposit.
 - Implementing a program to recognize vendors that go above and beyond.

- Offering compliant vendors a discounted fee at future events.
 - Charge vendors providing non-recyclable or non-compostable foodware options a higher event fee as they are contributing to high waste collection costs.
6. Provide water stations for event attendees to fill their reusable water bottles and eliminate the sale of single-use plastic water bottles.
 7. Consider reusable foodware options:
 - Foodware “rental system” – charge a small fee or deposit for the use of reusable food ware items such as plates, bowls, cups, cutlery etc.

F. FOOD RESCUE DONATIONS

1. Research opportunities for donating surplus edible food.
 - Coordinate with a food rescue organization.
 - The contact information for several food rescue organizations are found on the City's [website](#).
 - The organization that is selected as the best fit for the event/festival may have additional resources available to facilitate food rescue efforts (e.g., a food rescue app, additional hands-on support, volunteer coordination)
 - Work directly with food vendors/caterer to coordinate donating surplus edible food
2. Develop a plan to ensure that donatable food is collected and donated according to AHS guidelines (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eh-guide-distribution-donated-food.pdf>)

G. ADDITIONAL SERVICES

1. Visit the City's [website](#) to download a free Timeline Checklist to help plan your zero waste event.
2. Contact Event Services (eventservices@calgary.ca) for additional information.
3. Contact a local organization that offers waste services for events (a wide range of services are available from bin rentals to complete event waste management).