

YALE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
GUIDELINES FOR MINIMIZING SOLID WASTE GENERATED AT EVENTS
WHERE FOOD IS SERVED

THE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY IS:

1. REDUCE 2. REUSE 3. COMPOST 4. RECYCLE

THROWING STUFF AWAY IS A LAST RESORT

1. Food Service

- Consider using locally grown and made foods that have not been flown or trucked in from beyond the region.
- Keep in mind that vegetables, dairy and chicken have about the same carbon footprint. Beef and pork foods have on average a much higher impact.
- For foods not cultivated locally, consider finding out: are they fair trade?
- Serve foods that do not require utensils or individual packaging (eg, chips, fruits; vegetables; cheese; crackers)
- Educate your guests: label foods, not just with ingredients, but with origin and name of farm especially if local.

2. Waste management

A. REDUCE the amount your event generates

- Serve sugar, salt, creamer in bulk, not individual disposable packets (i.e., use salt and pepper shakers, a bowl and spoon for sugar, and place milk/cream on ice in original cartons or pitchers)
- Avoid stirrers, paper doilies, straws or packets of plastic cutlery
- Practice “portion control.” Ask for smaller portions or request food for fewer people than you actually expect. Caterers do not want to run out of food, it is common to serve more than anybody expects to consume. Aim for “zero leftovers.”
- Encourage “mindfulness.” “Take what you need to eat; not what you want.”

B. REUSE stuff when possible

- Collect and reuse plastic name tag holders.
- Use durable china, metal cutlery and glasses/ceramic cups
- Work with your vendor to ensure that serving trays are reused and not thrown away by establishing an agreed-upon storage location for reusable trays that caterers can take to use again.

C. COMPOST! It's possible with some effort.

- Use compostable plates and cutlery and drink containers, and **MAKE SURE THEY ARE DISPOSED OF IN CONTAINERS DESIGNATED FOR COMPOSTING.**
- Educate your guests: Make an announcement so guests know to put their waste in the bin designated for composting. Help raise the awareness of your guests about the 'sustainable' event they are attending; help them take ownership of its success.
- Circulate while food is being consumed and help your guests do the right thing.
- Place recycling and composting containers close to where guests will be eating and **LABEL THE BINS**
- Employ a worker to direct guests as to where things should be thrown out for recycling / composting.
- You'll still need a trash can, but make it smaller than your recycling and composting bins, and stick it to one side so guests see recycling and composting options first.
- Work with your vendor to ensure that items in the composting bin **ACTUALLY GET COMPOSTED.**
- If the amount of composting is small (less than a gallon) consider disposing of composting yourself in FES' barrel in Kroon's north courtyard.
- If possible, involve Yale Grounds Maintenance in larger amounts of compostable waste. Call 203-488-6888 to request and arrange for composting and recycling at your event.

D. CHOOSE ONE WASTE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- Plan for waste from your event to be either composted or recycled, but preferably not both. Compliance will be higher and the purity of the material will be greater if only a single approach is taken for any given event. The onus of managing multiple waste streams increases the organizational challenges.

E. RECYCLE, last but not least

- Use recyclable plates and cutlery and drink glasses, and **MAKE SURE THEY ARE DISPOSED OF IN CONTAINERS DESIGNATED FOR RECYCLING**
- Aluminum foil can be put in recycling (a small amount of food residue is okay)
- Educate your guests: Invite your guests to take advantage of the opportunity to minimize their solid waste by recycling what can't be composted, and composting what can't be reused
- Work with Yale Recycling to have the appropriate number of recycling receptacles in place.
- Work with FES Custodial personnel to make sure they are aware of your event and that the recyclables are put in the recycling bin on the loading dock!

Additional considerations

COORDINATE WITH YOUR CATERING VENDOR

- If you hire caterers who will be present on site serving food, ensure that their staff comply with your efforts to make it a sustainable event. Make sure they know to direct guests to composting (and recycling) bins.
- Consider asking your vendors to provide the composting, recycling and waste receptacles for their event.
- Ask the vendors to take back the composting and recycling, and try to ascertain that the waste is actually getting composted or recycled.

REDUCE before your event happens

- Go Paperless: Post event information, downloadable versions of programs, handouts, and itineraries on a web site for event participants.
- Ensure that program guides, handouts, and other written materials are limited and, when needed, printed on 100% post consumer paper and double sided using a vegetable-based ink. (Yale RIS can accommodate this)
- For reoccurring or annual events, avoid printing dates and slogans on signs, posters, and banners so that they may be easily reused.
- 100% Paperless Advertising: Promote and invite electronically. Require participants to register or RSVP electronically as well.

REUSE

- Coordinate with student groups, a local food bank or soup kitchen to donate any left-over food.
- Provide biodegradable "To-Go" containers for participants to take left-over food with them. These can be provided by your caterer or purchased through Corporate Express and Eastern Bag and Paper via Sci-Quest.