

Zero-Waste Program Guide

Last Updated: July, 2018

Special events can generate a lot of waste, which can be costly and negatively impact our environment. A zero-waste event aims to create no waste through maximizing recycling and composting. By following guidelines, events within residences can also achieve zero-waste status.

ONE: Promote Your Event

- Environmental awareness can be a great angle through which to market an event. It can also help you communicate the message of sustainability in residence
- Take advantage of electronic advertising through social media, e-mails, and university websites
- Use water soluble chalk for sidewalk campaigns
- Notify participants prior to the event that it will be zero-waste and invite them to bring reusable items such as mugs, refillable water bottles and their own cutlery

TWO: Identify and Reduce Potential Waste

Make a list of potential sources of waste and identify strategies to reduce them.

Some examples:

Leftovers and food scraps

- Most food scraps can be composted, so make sure to provide clearly marked composting stations (all compostable waste can be passed on to Hospitality Services Staff in residence dining halls for proper disposal)
- Leftover food can be distributed amongst participants so as not to go to waste
- If purchasing food from outside sources, make sure to request that disposable items (such as disposable cups, plates, utensils, and condiment packets) are not included

Packaging

- Consider purchasing food items and condiments in bulk to reduce packaging

Disposable napkins

- Most napkins are compostable, therefore encourage participants to dispose of them in an organics collection bin (available at the front desk)

Containers and cutlery

- Try to provide reusable containers and cutlery if possible. This could also decrease the cost of the event. If disposable products are unavoidable, consider using compostable containers and cutlery

Plastic bottles

- One of the most visible and environmentally damaging sources of waste is plastic bottles. Rehydration stations exist within residences and across campus and they offer chilled, filtered water. Encourage participants to bring their own refillable bottles

Flyers, posters, wrist bands/tickets, agendas, etc.

- Distributing event materials electronically can save printing costs, as well as decrease the amount of waste produced. If printing cannot be avoided, select the double-sided printing option and print on recycled paper
- Encourage participants to recycle their printed materials whenever possible

Other materials

- Make sure you know where the items purchased for your event are coming from. They should be made from recycled materials, and within Canada, if possible.
- Other materials can also include paint and decorations. Green choices include water-soluble and nontoxic paint, biodegradable or repurposed decorations. Try to use lighter shades of coloured paper, as dark coloured paper is often non-recyclable.

Party favours and prizes

- Consider buying things with minimal packaging in bulk to reduce waste
- Avoid items that are cheap and gimmicky, as they are likely to end up in the trash. Consider providing hospitality or other gift certificates (some can also be delivered electronically), or reusable water bottles and mugs

THREE: Recycle

Always form a recycling plan!

- Set up clearly marked and labeled recycling and compost bins throughout the event
- Remember **two-stream recycling** is in use at Western (This means paper products must be separated from containers)
- Make an announcement at your event informing participants where recycling and composting bins are, or provide information on recycling and composting in advance

RECYCLING GUIDE

Recyclables		Organics	Waste to Landfill
Paper	Containers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magazines • Flyers • Newspapers • Sticky notes • Cardboard (e.g. clean pizza boxes) • Coffee Cup Sleeves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All plastic containers • Glass jars • Metal cans • Foil containers • Milk cartons • Juice boxes • Disposable coffee cups and lids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper napkins and towels • Food scraps (including meat products) • Coffee grounds • Tea bags • Compostable paper plates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Styrofoam • Broken dishware or glass • Plastic bags • Light bulbs • Bubble wrap/ Foam packing peanuts • Tissue Paper • Chip bags and candy wrappers • Plastic wrap/ cutlery • Dark coloured paper or construction paper • Waxed or foil-coated paper or boxes • Wood (only compostable in small amounts)

Special Waste Disposal:

- Batteries and electronic waste should not be placed in the garbage; Western offers e-waste recycling bins which can be found in Residence recycling rooms
- To inquire or schedule a pick-up of special waste please contact Client Services at ext. 83304

FOUR: Clean Up

- Collect and recycle any remaining waste after an event
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning supplies when cleaning up
- Compostable waste can be passed on to Hospitality Services Staff in dining halls for proper disposal
- All other recyclable waste can be sorted and disposed of in the garbage and recycling area of each residence

FIVE: Evaluate

- Involve the organizing team in a discussion of the successes of the zero-waste event, and address areas that still need improvement. This can encourage better outcomes in future events.