

RETHINK WASTE: Planning a Zero Waste Event

Congratulations on your commitment to making your event a Zero Waste Event!

Events can generate large amounts of garbage – envision the trash cans filling up with paper plates, disposable cups, cans, and bottles. That's why reducing waste at events can have a pretty significant impact on our environment.

Why Zero Waste?

Zero Waste is a philosophy and strategy to reduce our environmental footprint by minimizing the amount of waste that must be landfilled through waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and other actions. Thinking towards zero waste is a mindset that helps us meet goals that are good for both people and the planet.

First Things First

So, you are ready to go Zero Waste! All of the waste at your event can be classified into three types of materials:

Recycling. Recycling includes the same things that you can recycle at your home or business such as: mixed paper, aluminum cans, tin cans, and plastic water bottles.

Composting. Composting includes ALL food and drink and compostable foodware. Compostable food ware is the stuff made from plant based substances such as corn and potato starch, but looks just like traditional plastic or paper, and can be composted at a large scale composting facility like we have at Deschutes Recycling.

Garbage. This is the stuff leftover that cannot be composted or recycled, like plastic wrap or a regular paper coffee cup that someone brought with them from outside your event.

An ideal zero waste event prevents waste through the use of reusable durable food ware. When that is not possible every effort should be made to ensure that waste created will be compostable or recyclable to minimize waste.



Learn more options for reducing waste in Deschutes County at:

RETHINKWASTEPROJECT.ORG



Zero Waste Stations

A successful zero waste event has clear zero waste stations with the following 3 bins:

1. **Recycle**
2. **Compost**
3. **Landfill**

For a large event, arrangements for the delivery and removal of the bins (roll carts) will go through the appropriate garbage & recycling service provider, depending on where the event is located. Tips for successful Zero Waste Stations:

- Trained volunteers are key to successful zero waste stations! Contact us if you need help recruiting or training volunteers.
- Contact The Environmental Center at 541.385.6908 to borrow our Rethink Waste "Zero Waste Station" supplies, including bin labels, bin signs, and large banners to bring awareness, visibility and consistency to the goals of your event. These are free for loan.
- Group the 3 bins together under a zero waste banner with appropriate signage, in the same order at each station for visual continuity.
- If possible, remove or cover all stand-alone trash cans to divert everything to the zero waste stations.
- Identify high traffic, visible areas for the placement of the stations. Place stations near entrance and exits, food vendors and other high waste areas.
- For outside events, secure bins and station banners from strong winds.

Volunteers

Staffing the Zero Waste Stations, whether they are paid or volunteer, is absolutely essential! Having staff helps educate participants and ensures that the right materials are being put in the right places. Participants should do the sorting themselves, and the volunteers are there to verbally direct them.



Composting Guidelines

Composting at a zero waste event includes food and compostable food ware. Follow these guidelines for a successful event that composts as much as possible:

- Food ware used must be clearly marked as compostable* on the original packaging.

**Food ware must be certified compostable (biodegradable/renewable/natural is not accepted). Look on the packaging for "US Composting Council" or "meets ASTM 6400" composting standards.*

- You can purchase certified compostable food ware including: utensils, hot and cold cups, plates and bowls, straws, lids etc. Regular napkins can be composted.
- ALL food is accepted for composting, including meats, breads and liquids.

Working With Vendors

Events must have 100% participation from all vendors for a large scale zero waste event to be successful. Having a zero waste clause in vendor applications and contracts, and outlining what is expected of them, lets your vendors know your goals. Be sure to clearly communicate this with your vendors early on so they know what to expect, including where to order and how to identify certified compostable food ware. On event day be sure to:

- Check in with each vendor and inspect all their food ware. Keep any samples of non-compostables to show zero waste volunteers.
- Show vendors where their closest zero waste station is located.
- Instruct vendors not to set up a garbage can for public use, ask them to direct customers to the nearest station.
- Suggest vendors set up their own recycle/compost/landfill station behind their booth to be congruent with the goals of the event.

Purchasing Compostable Supplies

There are several options for purchasing compostable food ware and bags.

Locally Oregon Green Products: www.oregongreenproducts.com
Cash & Carry in Bend (Note: they do not currently carry compostable utensils)

Other Sysco (contact your local representative)
World Centric: www.WorldCentric.org

A community partnership:



Biodegradable X Compostable

'Biodegradable' means that a product will break down into carbon dioxide, water and biomass within a reasonable amount of time in the natural environment. The term "biodegradable" has no legal enforcement or definition.

'Compostable' items are biodegradable, but with an added benefit: when they break down, they release valuable nutrients into the soil, aiding the growth of trees and plants. These products degrade within a few months in an industrial composting facility and produce no toxic residues.

Education & Promotion

Be prepared to communicate to all event participants that your event is Zero Waste. Prior to the event you can share this through pre-event promotions such as posters, print ads, radio spots, vendor applications and other media.

At the event, any additional education you can do is great! If appropriate, consider making announcements on stage, posting additional signage and educating your vendors on Zero Waste principles.

Collection Services

Depending on where your event is held, your garbage service provider will be one of the following companies:

Bend Garbage & Recycling. North of Greenwood and Newport Avenues, and Downtown Bend. 541-323-4069 | Contact: Susan Baker

Cascade Disposal. South of Greenwood and Newport Avenues, except Downtown Bend. 541-382-6660

High Country Disposal. Redmond, Terrebonne, Sisters, Black Butte Ranch and Camp Sherman. 541-323-4069 | Contact: Susan Baker

The Rethink Waste Project provides tools and resources to help you reduce waste – and rethink the way you think about waste. From learning easy ways to reduce waste at home, such as composting and simple non-toxic alternatives, to purchasing greener products and understanding what it means to buy local, we can all take steps towards the same goal: reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink. Visit RethinkWasteProject.org to learn more.

Rethink Waste is a project of The Environmental Center. We translate sustainability into practical local action to create a healthy future for people and the planet.

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