



GUIDE Series

Environmental Tips for Calgary Businesses

Green Calgary is a non-profit organization striving to create healthy homes and communities for all Calgarians. The Commercial Environmental Services program assists businesses in reducing their environmental impact associated with waste. We offer the information, education, resources and tools necessary to divert waste from landfill and reach your waste diversion goals. Our one-on-one support allows us to understand your needs and customize services and recommendations for your business.

Food & Beverage Industry

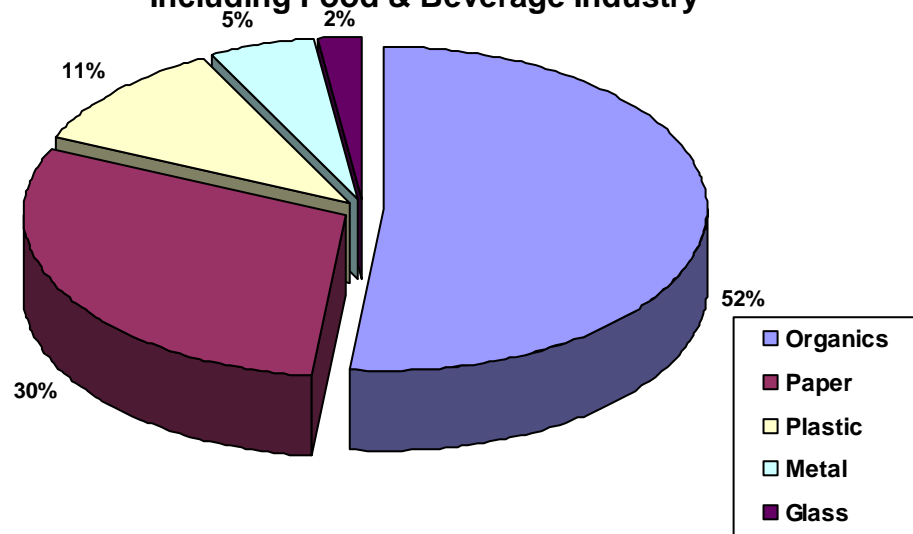
This document has been prepared by Green Calgary's Commercial Environmental Services team as a guide for environmental actions that businesses operating in the food and beverage industry can take. This document outlines common environmental improvements that can be made by business in the food and beverage industry. While the main focus is on waste reduction and diversion we have also taken care to look into other issues such as water and energy and procurement in relation to the food and beverage industry. For more information please contact [James Emerson](#) of Commercial Environmental Services at 403.230.1443 Ext 227.

Businesses in this Industry include:

- Large chain grocers
- Independent grocers
- Restaurants & coffee shops
- Farmers markets
- Liquor/beer/wine shops
- Specialty stores (bakeries, delicatessens, butchers, health food stores etc)
- Corner stores/convenience stores

Retail Waste Composition¹

Including Food & Beverage Industry



Did you know: According to a City of Calgary Report, an estimated 1.45 tonnes of waste is generated by every person working in Calgary per year. By reducing waste output by half, one person can eliminate up to 750 kg of garbage going to landfills each year.¹

Solid Waste Tips

❖ **Compost Organic Waste:**

Organic waste is the largest piece of the waste stream produced by the food and beverage industry. In Calgary most of this waste is sent to landfills where it decomposes, releasing methane into the atmosphere, a potent green house gas that contributes to climate change. Composting organic waste can reduce both landfill space and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, composting transforms this waste into a nutrient rich soil amendment and a valuable product.

Action Ideas

- Have your organic waste taken to a [commercial compost facility](#) by a waste [hauler](#).
- Offer food that is damaged or approaching expiry but still safe for consumption to employees and customers at a reduced price.
- Send surplus prepared foods to food banks and soup kitchens.
 - Learn more about food donations in the [Charitable Donation of Food Act](#)².
- Contact Green Calgary's [Commercial Environmental Services](#) team for more information.

❖ Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Packaging:

Many foods, ingredients and items used in the food and beverage industry need to be shipped in from other places. Consequently these items need to be packaged in order to protect them from damage. Although many materials used in packaging are recyclable, there is often an unnecessary amount of packaging used and these materials can still find their way into landfills.

Action Ideas

- Work with suppliers to minimize packaging.
- Purchase locally produced products to minimize packaging.
- Reuse packaging such as pallets and cardboard boxes whenever possible.
- Establish recycling programs for [cardboard](#), [plastic](#) and [wood](#) packaging material.
- Have [Commercial Environmental Services](#) perform a visual waste assessment to determine where your company can reduce packaging and to find the right recycler to suit your needs.

❖ Educate Employees:

The food and beverage industry is one of the largest employers in Calgary. Training your staff in environmental issues and practices will have a significant impact on the amount of waste produced and recycled in our city. Employees will take this knowledge home with them increasing the effectiveness of the City of Calgary's Blue Cart program.

Action Ideas

- Train staff on the importance of reducing waste and recycling materials properly.
- Encourage green behaviour by recognizing the eco champions at your work place.
- Ensure that you have appropriate bins and signage for all materials collected to avoid confusion.
- Invite Green Calgary to give an [education presentation](#) to your staff.

Did you know: According to a 2001 Statistics Canada study, the food and beverage industry employed 43,830 people, the largest number in the retail sector.³

❖ Avoid Disposables:

People often forget the top of the waste reduction hierarchy is reduce, followed by reuse and recycle. Single use or disposable items make up a large percentage of the waste generated by the food and beverage industry. Items like coffee cups, stir sticks, sugar packages, single use creamers and disposable take out containers are all sources of waste that can be reduced or eliminated. Eliminating the waste completely can be easier than implementing a recycling program.

Action Ideas

- Purchase products like sugar milk and flour in bulk.
- Provide reusable spoons at coffee stations instead of stir sticks.
- Offer incentives for customers who bring in their own take out containers or travel mugs.
- Sell reusable take out containers with meal purchases.

- Join the [Take Out With Out](#)⁴ campaign!

Did you know: In 2006 an estimated 6.5 million trees were cut down for the sole purpose of creating disposable coffee cups.⁵

❖ **Recycle!**

In the food and beverage industry many recyclables such as glass, plastic, tin, beverage containers, paper and cardboard still end up in landfills. There are many ways to ensure that these materials are recycled properly.

Action Ideas

- Ask your current hauler about recycling services they offer.
- Have all recyclable materials picked up by a [commercial recycler](#).
- Work with [Commercial Environmental Services](#) to find the best recycler for your business.

Energy Tips

❖ **Conserve Energy:**

The majority of Calgary's energy comes from coal burning power plants. Coal is a non-renewable fossil fuel that produces CO₂ emissions as it's burned. This greenhouse gas is one of the main contributors to climate change. By reducing energy consumption your business will be saving the environment while saving some money at the same time.

Action Ideas

- Purchase wind power for your business from [Bullfrog Power](#)⁶.
- Install sensor activated lights in all bathrooms.
- Reduce broiler, fryer and range preheating and idle time.
- Run exhaust fans at lower speeds.
- Purchase [Energy Star](#)⁷ commercial cooking equipment which can save up to 40% more energy.
- Reduce hot water temperature to satisfy [sanitation code](#)⁸ requirements.

Water Tips

❖ **Conserve Water:**

The food and beverage industry uses large amounts of water in food preparation and washing. Organic material is often washed down sinks which adds to the organic load in the water system which must be cleaned out at waste water treatment plants. Use these tips to help conserve water as much as possible.

Action Ideas

- Install low flow toilet and tap aerators in bathrooms, or retro fit existing toilets to be low flush.
- Install sensor activated faucets in bathrooms.
- Use sink screens to stop organic material from being washed down drains.
- Thaw food in full sinks instead of running frozen items under water.
- Install low flow sprayers in dishwashers and only wash full loads.

Green Procurement Tips

❖ **Buy Green:**

There's more to waste reduction than just making sure all materials are recycled properly. Waste reduction starts with thinking about the products that your company uses, where they come from and the waste generated in their production. A green procurement policy will help your company to close the loop by purchasing products with recycled content.

Action Ideas

- Create a green procurement policy using the Recycling Council of Alberta's [Green Procurement Template](#)⁹.
- Purchase products that are made from recycled content and are easily recyclable.
- Purchase locally grown produce where possible, these products may require less packaging.
- Work with the [Commercial Environmental Services team](#) to help create your green procurement policy.
- Purchase recycled content office supplies from Green Calgary's [Eco Store](#).

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1 Executive Summary, The City of Calgary ICI / C&D Waste Characterization Study, January 2006
2 Province of Alberta Charitable Donation of Food Act, Alberta Queen's Printer 2002
3 Retail Employment in Alberta, Statistics Canada 2001
4 <http://takeoutwithout.com/about/>
5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_cup
6 <http://www.bullfrogpower.com/>
7 <http://www.energystar.gov/>
8 <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Food-Code-pt4.pdf>
9 <http://www.recycle.ab.ca/images/stories/Download/greenprocurementtemplate.pdf>
10 http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/Files/Business_Fact_Sheets/food_processing_fs.pdf
11 http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/Files/Business_Fact_Sheets/food_service_industry_fs.pdf
12 Waste Minimization Manual, Food & Beverage Retail Industry, Alberta Environmental Protection
13 Waste Minimization Restaurants
14 Waste Minimization Unlicensed Restaurants, Drive-Ins & Take-Out Food Services
15 Waste Minimization Grocery Stores