



Festivals and events generate a considerable amount of waste. This is not only costly, but also negatively impacts the environment. This guide offers ways to minimize waste generated during an event or festival, and while each event is unique, many of the suggestions can be adapted to events large or small. Advance planning is key in making waste-reduction efforts successful, and taking steps to limit waste in the first place will go a long way towards reducing litter, cost, and the negative impacts that waste has on our natural world.

Share/communicate your green message

- ✓ Ensure that vendors participating adhere to the same green protocol (minimal/no handouts, etc). Create a green procurement policy for vendors that outlines what is expected in terms of products/materials they bring onsite as well as what the festival/event itself will be doing.
- ✓ To facilitate consistent communication, start with a clear statement of your intention to carry out a green meeting/festival/event. A clear and simple statement of your green plans will be sufficient.
- ✓ Prepare consistent and highly visible signage for the event to remind participants of what environmental initiatives are in place, and how they can help (ie. Including signage in bathroom stalls, etc).
- ✓ Be sure to thank your staff and volunteers for their contribution to the greening effort and recognize those efforts in post-event communications such as news releases and reports. Consider preparing a separate report about your event's green aspects (highlighting successes, lessons learned and encouragement to others) to be shared through your website or distributed electronically to participants.

Terminology:

Streams

Describes the separation of the various types of materials in the waste ie. beverage containers, mixed recycling etc.

Zero Waste

When 90% or more of all waste generated is diverted from the landfill.

Waste Hauler

The company that takes your waste and recycling to its end destination.

Contamination

When garbage is mixed into your recycling stream, this is considered contaminated. Bins with over 5% contamination may not be accepted as recycling and may have to be landfilled.

Remember: the three R's are a hierarchy with reduction at the top



When creating event signage keep reuse in mind. If purchased, the signage should be durable, generic and undated so it can be reused at other events.



Ask vendors not to distribute flyers or disposable swag which will likely be thrown away either at the event or soon after.



Avoid disposable plastic water bottles. Although recyclable, the bottling, packaging and shipping of billions of litres of bottled water leaves a large environmental burden world-wide. Instead, opt to provide a water truck where festival goers can fill up their reusable water bottle.



Make attempts to reduce the amount of paper used when advertising, printing brochures, pamphlets, schedules, program highlights or tickets. If some printing is necessary, try to use 100% post-consumer recycled paper.



Recycling

Find a service provider for the event that can handle recyclables and organics. This may require hiring more than one waste hauler. Some recyclers will provide smaller receptacles needed on site, while others will only provide larger bins for collection. For a list of multi-material recyclers please visit our online recycling directory.

To increase convenience, accessibility, and to limit contamination, bins should always be placed next to each other to make a sorting station.

Stations should be placed in strategic, high traffic locations around the event.

Good signage for each bin is crucial. Pictures and graphics help cross language barriers and people process them faster than text.

Cordon off existing garbage receptacles and have signs explaining where the recycling stations are located.

To save costs on refundable beverage container collection, partner with a local charity or consider donating the proceeds to a local group.

Have volunteers supervise the sorting stations. Without consistent monitoring there will most likely be a considerable amount of contamination of the various streams which could lead to all streams being landfilled.



Waste Generators

Consider what types of recyclable material will be disposed of at the event and who the biggest waste generators will be. Often the largest contributors to the waste stream are the food vendors.

Make reusable, recyclable or compostable food wares (cups, plates, bowls, cutlery, etc.) mandatory as part of your green procurement policy. Include this in the permitting process for all vendors serving food or drink.



Compostable food ware

There are many products out there that claim to be biodegradable or compostable. However, these labels mean nothing unless they are backed by a third party certification. Food ware that is not certified has not been tested and certified to meet ASTM standards and so may not breakdown within the set time frame required.

Therefore, it is crucial to only purchase food ware that meets these standards. These products will have a label on them that includes one or more of the certifications listed on the right. Also important to note is that haulers will not accept any organic material containing non-certified compostable food ware.

- ✓ BPI
- ✓ ASTM D6400 or D6868
- ✓ CAN/BNQ 0017-088
- ✓ EN 13432
- ✓ OK Compost

Ensure compostable food ware is taken to a commercial composting facility as it is not designed to breakdown in a backyard composter or landfill.

How to calculate your diversion rate:

Summary: Add up all of the various materials that are recycled at your event. Take the total weight of the recycled material and divide by the total amount of waste including landfill material.

Example:

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Mixed Recycling 12.87 kg Beverage Containers 20.4 kg Organics 90.2 kg Total Recycled Material: 123.47 kg	Garbage (5.5kg) + Total Recycled Material (123.47 kg) = 128.97 Kg	123.47 Kg Recycled Material / 128.97 Kg Total Waste = 0.957 > 96% Diversion rate

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