

Food for Thought

To maximize operational efficiency, restaurants, cafeterias, and bars can reduce, reuse, and recycle both the "dry" and "wet" materials generated in their facilities. Paper products, including cardboard, plastic containers, cans and bottles are considered "dry" recyclables, while food and yard waste and is "wet".

Not surprisingly, a large portion of the waste generated at eating establishments is food-related — including preparation wastes, scraps, surplus, and spoilage. This food waste — along with garden waste and other organic materials — creates serious environmental challenges in B.C. landfills.

Because the food in waste attracts vectors (birds and rats), active working faces are covered daily — which is costly and uses valuable landfill space. As the organic waste break down and compress under this cover, gases and liquid are formed.

Landfill gas (which contains carbon dioxide and methane) has a strong smell and contributes to the "greenhouse effect." Leachate (the liquid formed when water filters through landfills) carries unwanted dissolved organics to local waterways.

The following hints will help you lessen the impact of food waste on your bottom line and the environment.



Reduce

- Reduce portion sizes if most customers are not cleaning their plates.
- Prevent overproduction of food through menu planning.
- Encourage customers to take only as much as they'll eat and eat what they take.
- Eliminate garnishes such as lettuce leaves.
- Buy less food more often to avoid spoilage.
- Minimize the trimming of vegetables.
- Clean fryers and filter oil daily to reduce oil use.

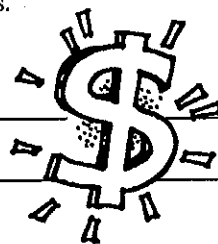


Reuse

- Use vegetable trimmings to make soups or stocks.
- Donate usable food to community groups or shelters.

Recycle

- Compost all organic waste (e.g. either through a community composting program or in an onsite facility).
- Grind food scraps (excluding meat and dairy products) and sell or give to local farmers.



A Canadian Success Story

Fairmont Hotels & Resort (formerly known as Canadian Pacific Hotels) is an industry leader in the 3Rs as they apply to food waste. Since launching its Green Partnership Program in 1991, the chain has:

- Diverted food waste from landfills through industrial composting,
- Introduced *ECO-Cuisine* as part of its *Eco-Meet* conference planning package, and
- Donated untouched food to local shelters, soup kitchens and food banks through its *Second Harvest* program.

Enjoy the benefits of wasting away!

Here's how your eating establishment can save money, boost its "green" image, protect the environment, and support provincial and local legislation.

1. Establish a Waste Reduction Committee, with representatives from all operational areas (e.g. administrative offices, food and catering services, and janitorial services).
2. Research waste reduction success stories in the hospitality industry.
3. Conduct a waste audit. Contact the Regional District for a *Waste Audit Kit*.
4. Prioritize waste streams and identify how you can reduce, reuse, and recycle (in that order) the materials in each stream.
5. Set waste reduction goals, develop a Waste Reduction Plan, and introduce policies and procedures that support your plan (e.g. purchasing policies that require less packaging). Contact the Regional District for a *Waste Reduction Planning Kit*.
6. Identify "champions" and establish waste reduction programs in each work area (e.g. bar, kitchen).
7. Organize space to sort and store recyclables.
8. Provide suitable recycling containers for each area (e.g. well-marked bins in public areas) and arrange for regular pick-up.
9. Educate employees (including janitors) and guests about proper recycling procedures.
10. Promote recycling to guests and employees and recognize those who participate.
11. Publicize your commitment to waste reduction in your advertising.
12. Monitor, evaluate and refine your recycling program regularly.
13. **Enjoy the benefits.**

The Paper Chase!

While 75 percent of organizations recycle paper and cardboard to some extent, these products still account for the biggest portion of business waste. Therefore, the most important things you can do to divert waste are to reduce, reuse, or recycle all paper products.

Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling Paper Products

- Buy products in bulk to minimize packaging
- Encourage guests and staff to reuse or recycle newspapers, magazines, etc
- Replace paper napkins with cloth napkins where appropriate
- Install hand dryers or linen rolls in bathrooms
- Use e-mail, post messages on a central board, or circulate single copies for internal communication
- Save documents on disc rather than making hard copies
- Proof documents on screen before printing
- Ensure all employees know how to operate printers and photocopiers
- Photocopy on both sides of paper
- Eliminate unnecessary forms
- Use self-sticking fax memo notes instead of fax cover sheets
- Circulate reports and publications rather than making individual copies
- Revise mailing lists to avoid unnecessary mailings
- Use paper printed only on one side for scrap or printing drafts
- Recycle paper products that can't be eliminated or reused

Waste Reduction Benefits

Financial Benefits include waste management and treatment costs, reduced overhead and administrative or health and safety costs, increased productivity and/or improved product quality, and/or reduced expenses in raw materials.

Regulatory Benefits may include fewer compliance requirements, decreased risk of violating regulations, and reduced time and frustration associated with reporting, permit applications, etc.

Public Image and Marketing Benefits can be realized by promoting your environmentally-conscious practices, which could lead to free media exposure and increased sales.

Liability Benefits can be gained particularly if hazardous waste generation is reduced or eliminated.

Ecological Benefits include extending the lives of non-renewable resources, decreasing the volume of waste for disposal, and reducing the future potential of damaging or polluting the environment.

While many restaurants, cafes and bars enjoy the benefits of waste reduction, others face challenges that make waste reduction either cost prohibitive or of minimal benefit. These challenges include:

Waste Reduction Challenges

Lack of Information: Many restaurants, cafes and bars operators are unaware of the benefits of waste reduction, and don't know how to develop or implement a recycling program.

Inadequate Space: Space constraints often make recycling prohibitive. Restaurant, cafe and bar receiving docks are typically designed to provide space for receptacles and compactors, but not for sorting and storing recyclables.

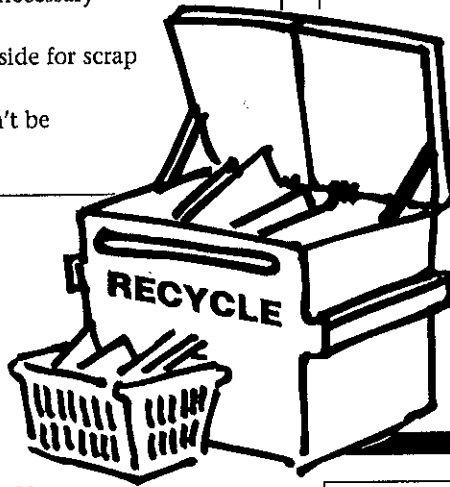
Lack of Control: Some smaller restaurants, cafes and bars are attached to malls or other commercial centres and must share waste receptacles with other businesses.

Quantity of Recyclables: Some operators don't appreciate that recycling even small quantities of waste benefits the organization and the environment.

Staff Turnover and Training: Waste reduction requires additional staff training, and restaurants, cafes and bars typically experience high staff turnover.

Other Waste Reduction Hints

- Purchase food and other products in refillable, reusable, or at least recyclable containers.
- Replace disposable items (e.g. cups, dishes, utensils, trays, coffee filters, and single-serving condiment packages) with reusable items.
- Replace beverage bottles and cans (e.g. most beer and soft drinks can be served on tap, reducing both the cost of buying beverages and disposing of recycling cans and bottles).
- Set up an in-house recycling program for cans, glass, fine paper, newspaper, metals, and plastic.
- Select the minimum appropriate packaging for take-out food.
- Implement a "first-in, first-out" inventory to reduce off-spec materials.



Contact Information:

B.C. Green Economy Initiative www.gov.bc.ca/ges/

B.C. Materials Exchange 1-800-667-4321

B.C. Recycling Hotline 1-800-667-4321

Recycling Council of B.C. (604) 683-6009
www.rcbc.bc.ca

Regional District of North Okanagan (250) 545-5368
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