

Determining the Best Recycling Practices for Events at Tufts



Thank you for taking the time and care to consider how your event contributes to our world's waste problem and take action to lessen its environmental impact.

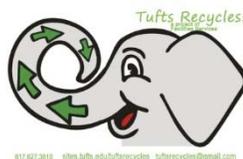
Unless an event utilizes durable, reusable, and washable ware, extraneous disposables and waste will be produced. This document has been created to help you understand the sometimes complicated planning choices involved in developing a recycling plan that is appropriate for your occasion.

Factors influencing recommendations in this guide include product impact and cost of product manufacturing, impact on Tufts' waste, staff and guest effort, economics, and logistics.

Please note that food waste composting is currently unavailable on the Boston and Grafton campuses. Planning the appropriate volume of food for the expected guest count is the best way to reduce food waste.

Please note: Tufts Recycles! does not recommend using bioplastic-ware or utensils, they are questionable for our ecosystem, they don't biodegrade, they are costly, and they are not recyclable with conventional plastics.

Event waste management practices vary widely and it is a dynamic subject. Our recommendations reflect the best waste practices specific to operations at Tufts University as of FY15.



Zero Waste Defined

An authentic zero-waste event is one that begins with planning potential waste sources out of the meal and associated activities. The goal of a zero waste event is to produce minimal waste and to ensure that unavoidable waste that is produced is completely recyclable. Most zero-waste events involve the composting of food waste. A true zero-waste event would have only recycling/composting receptacles, no trash containers, and ideally no disposable ware would be used.

Waste Assessment

Depending on certain factors, composting at events can be complicated and not all events are compatible with composting. Be sure to focus on the waste that you expect will be most substantial at the end of the event (by weight or bulk). For example, composting might not be the right choice if you do not expect to have much food leftover from the event, or if you expect that the guests will consume most of the food served.

Event Waste Reduction and Recycling Considerations

Predicting the volume and type of waste that your event will generate is one of the first steps in determining whether the event is compatible with composting, and it will help you determine what type of waste bins you will need.

Things to consider when creating a zero-waste event:

- Type of serving ware used
- Meal style
- Number of guests
- Amount of extraneous packaging
- Environmental impact of products served
- Whether or not an item requires recycling

On the next page we look at waste from a typical lunch meeting to determine the best recycling response.

Sample Assessment of Waste Importance at a 50 Person Lunch

| Item | Weight (trash is paid for by weight) | Toxicity/Impact (of production and disposal) | Regulated (MA law requires certain waste to be recycled) | Comments |
|---|--|---|--|--|
|  70 Plates | Light | Minimal | No | Unless an existing compost bin is nearby, the impact of paper plate disposal is miniscule in our waste stream. |
|  125 Napkins | Light | Minimal | No | Unless an existing compost bin is nearby, the impact of napkin disposal is minimum in our waste stream. |
|  55 Sandwiches | Heavy | Medium, Higher with meat | Not in small quantities | Guests are likely to eat the whole sandwich. The plastic serving tray is recyclable. |
|  Plastic Servingware | Medium | Medium | No | Plastics put a big chemical burden on the environment through production and incineration. It is preferable to reuse this tray. Next best choice is to recycle it in the same bin as the cans. |
|  50 Aluminum Cans | Medium | Very High | Yes | In this example, ensuring that all aluminum cans are recycled would make the largest impact. |
|  120 Condiment pack | Light | Minimal | No | Individually packaged items are not compatible with compost. A true zero waste event would provide bottles of condiments. |
|  60 Chip Bags | Light | Minimal | No | Individually packed items are not compatible with compost. Usually all chip servings are consumed. A bulk bowl of chips would be served at a zero waste meal. |

Conclusions:

Composting should not be the main focus, and not composting would have little negative impact on our waste.

Ensure that bins for cans are strategically located next to trash cans at your event and recycle the black plastic tray during event cleanup.

Events Planned to be Zero Waste

Okay, you have planned with your event team and the caterer to ensure that the event will be a true zero-waste event, now what?

Instructions for Composting During In-House Events

Pre-Event

Request special composting liners from *Tufts Recycles!* or Facilities Services.

Download and customize signs and then print them on yellow paper.

Plan for opportunities to inform guests of the effort. Ideas include verbal announcements, table tents, and a note on handouts.

Event Setup

Transition existing trash bins into compost bins by lining them with composting liners and labeling over the existing trash label with the yellow signs.

Group bins into clusters containing one for composting, one for glass, metal & plastics, and a paper bin if applicable.

Event

Promote zero-waste and recycling during the event.

Post Event

Quality control: check compost for contamination. Composting facilities have a zero tolerance policy for contamination. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty. Contaminated compost is trash.

Bring clean compost to one of the many drop off locations (update composting sites on website and link to it) on campus.

Congratulations on your successful effort to minimize your event's waste impact! @tuftsrecycles on Twitter and Instagram would love to hear about this effort. Hashtag ideas are #zerowastetufts #wastelesstufts #tuftscomposts #greeneventtufts #tuftsrecycles

Instructions for Composting During Full Service Events

Pre-Event

Request a zero-waste menu from the caterer.

Request composting & recycling services from Facilities Services. *Tufts Recycles!* will want to confirm that the menu is compatible with a zero-waste management plan, and to determine how to customize signage.

Include waste stations on the event floor plan/layout that you provide to Facilities Services.

Request that Facilities Services remove compost and deposit it in our organics dumpster.

Event

Promote zero-waste and recycling during the event. Ideas include verbal announcements or a note on handouts.

Tufts Recycles! may offer “waste advisors” who are students that will monitor and assist guests with recycling and composting. This service is offered for the largest campus events or when our schedule allows.

Post Event

Facilities Services will remove the compost and the compost bins when they return to remove the tables. Please request that Facilities pick up any compost bins that are accidentally left behind.

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Useful Resources

Planning a zero-waste event at Tufts

Customizable and general promotional documents

Tufts recycling instructions for outside caterers

List of campus composting drop off locations

**The Tufts Office of Sustainability's recommendations for
planning a green event**