

# Guide to Planning a Zero Waste Event

Tufts University Facilities Services and *Tufts Recycles!*

October 2014

**Thank you for your interest in hosting a zero waste event! Organizing a zero waste event and integrating composting into the event process takes special attention, equipment, and planning, and we are prepared to help you along the way.**

Planning is the first step to a successful zero waste event. Be sure to review the *Determining the Best Recycling Practices for Events at Tufts* prior to the planning process. Initially determining the best practice for your event will ensure that planning is in alignment with the event's zero-waste goals.

This guide covers event recycling from the perspective of Tufts Recycles!/Facilities Services and is geared to events catered or internally managed. Please see the Office of Sustainability's green events guide for tips on greening all aspects of an event.

## Preferable Ware Choices



### Working with Catering

Planning a menu with foods that require little or no serving ware is the best way to implement a true waste-free event.

The next best step is planning meal service to exclude extraneous waste and contaminants; this is also a prerequisite to hosting a zero waste event (events with single serve items with individual packaging or wrappers are not zero-waste events). Dressings, coffee accompaniments, butter, potato chips, desserts and other "fixings" should be served in bulk trays, bowls, cartons, carafes and pitchers. Wooden coffee stirrers should be used for coffee stations.

## Serving Ware

Depending on the expertise and flexibility of the caterer, it might be necessary for you to suggest foods compatible with easy to recycle/compost serving ware and disposables.

There are many ways to interpret the term zero-waste so it is important to instruct outside caterers on our practices.

Our [guide to recycling at Tufts](#) is a useful document for outside caterers.

Including composting, the Tufts' recycling program has four stream requiring distinct bins, meaning there are separate bins for composting, paper recyclables, plastic and metal recyclables, and trash, which is not needed at a true zero waste event. Non-chlorine bleached paper is also accepted in the composting bin. A zero waste event should be planned to create less waste and to reduce waste streams, making disposal easiest for guests.



**Bulk condiments are necessary for a zero waste event**



**Too much packaging is hard to recycle and is difficult/confusing for guests**



**Menu planned for two bins; No trash.**

# Useful Tips

<b>Ware</b> <small>(compostable paper should not contain chlorine bleach)</small>	<b>Product Examples</b> <small>(the most important feature of compostable disposables is the absence of chlorine bleach. The following examples are not recommendations. Please shop around for the best price.)</small>	<b>What bins does it go in?</b> <small>Some items are allowed in more than one bin</small>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Paper Plates &amp; Bowls</b>		 	<p>If composting is not appropriate for your event, it is not necessary to buy compostable-ware.</p>
<b>Paper Cups</b>		 	<p>There might be times when it is easiest to put compostable paper cups in compost. Availability of bins and floor space for bins could help determine which option is best for an event.</p>
<b>Napkins</b>		 	
<b>Plastic Cups</b>			
<b>Aluminum &amp; Plastic Serving Trays</b>	 		
<b>Plastic Utensils</b>	 		
<b>Compostable Plastics</b>			<p>In addition to the fact that they do not break down during an open air composting process, many studies question the safety and benefit of "biodegradable" plastics. <a href="http://www.bpiworld.org/science-of-biodegradation">http://www.bpiworld.org/science-of-biodegradation</a>  <a href="http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/corn-plastic-to-the-rescue-126404720/?all">http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/corn-plastic-to-the-rescue-126404720/?all</a></p>
		<b>What bins does it go in?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Food Waste</b>		 	<p>Waste containing large amounts of animal products should be brought to either Carmichael or Dewick to prevent pests.</p>



## Compostable Plastics



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

# 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

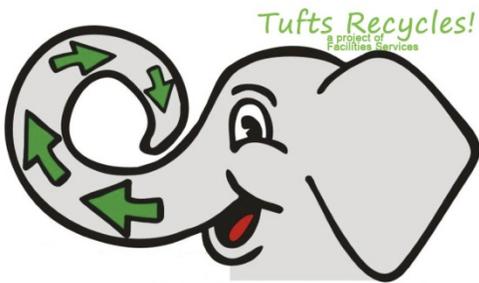
Promote zero-waste and recycling during the event. Ideas include verbal announcements or a note on handouts.

*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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Tufts Recycles!  
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