



SIX SIMPLE TIPS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS RECYCLING

1. **Design for Waste Reduction and Recycling:** Plan for food menu and event decorations to leave less waste and allow recycling and composting of leftovers. Select "finger foods" that can be served in just a napkin, like a hot dog or burrito, or use food as serving containers, like a salad served in a cut fresh melon. Use live greens and plants for decorations. Consider renting washable/reusable plates, cups, serveware, and linen rather than throwaways.

Choose entertainment and games that produce little or no waste. Save paper by printing invitations or registration forms on both sides; better yet, e-mail them and also save postage. For reoccurring events, make banners and signs that can be used again. Hire event managers and caterers who do "minimum waste events," and write recycling tasks into all contracts with vendors and concessionaires. Contact Lois Courchaine at the Central Contra Costa Waste Authority (925-906-1801) for advice on pick-up services for recyclables and compostable materials. Most waste haulers and local service clubs will take your recyclables at no charge.

2. **Purchase Wisely:** Purchase supplies in bulk-sized containers to reduce packaging waste. Choose products with very little or no packaging. Buy things in packaging that can be recycled. Rent—don't buy—equipment and tools. Ask for deliveries like bread in returnable trays. Precut vegetables and meat save time and leave less waste. Ask your recycler and composter for a list of acceptable products to guide you in shopping. For example, when buying single use products, such as cups, plates, bowls, bags, napkins, towels, and food wrappers, don't choose nonrecyclable plastics, styrofoam, and metal or plastic coated papers. Instead, pick products made from paper or cardboard so they can be composted. Close the recycling loop by making sure the products you buy are made with recycled materials.
3. **Recycle:** Typical materials to collect include beverage bottles and cans and cardboard. Plan ahead to donate leftover unserved food, paper napkins, plates, condiments, and decorations to local food banks and charities. Contact Lois Courchaine at the Central Contra Costa Waste Authority (925-906-1801) for advice on other materials to collect and the loan or rent of recycling collection containers. For best results, be sure to put a well-marked recycling collection can next to each trashcan. Using clear plastic bags as can liners makes it easy to check for nonrecyclable waste.
4. **Compost:** Typical materials for compost are kitchen scraps and plate scrapings. Most composters will also accept paper or "bio-plastic" plates and cups, lawn and leaf clippings, and recyclable paper and wax-coated boxes mixed in. Be sure to keep large amounts of plastic and any glass out of the compost mix or the composter cannot accept it.
5. **Switch to Nontoxic Cleaners:** Avoid cleaning products made with hazardous chemicals. Look for products marked "biodegradable" or "nontoxic" when buying dish detergent, disinfectants, toilet bowl cleaners, drain cleaner, floor wash, polish, glass cleaners, and laundry detergent. Reduce your use of bug killers and insect foggers at outdoor events.
6. **Educate Event Workers and Guests:** Tell guests about your "green event" and ask for their help in making it a success by recycling right. Train all your event staff and volunteers in how to reduce waste and collect the recyclables. Celebrate your success by announcing during the event, and in thank you notes later, how much waste was kept out of the landfill.