



Zero Waste Event Guide

So you are holding an event and wonder if you can reduce the impact on the planet and its people, even save money, and make it a *Zero Waste Event*. The resources you need already exist on Clark's campus - so YES you can!

If you are willing to plan ahead, organize a little, and take responsibility for the waste you might produce at your event, it is easy to make any event at Clark a *Zero Waste Event*. This *Zero Waste Event Guide* will help. This Guide includes:

- Five Easy Steps to a Zero Waste Event
- What Products to Use & Avoid for maximum green
- Compost & Recycle 'What Goes Where'
- Sample Signs & Logos for your use

Five Easy Steps to a Zero Waste Event

1. Plan ahead: Think about materials when planning, purchasing and ordering. This is especially important in regards to product packaging and food presentation! (Pro tip: see the [What Products to Use & Avoid](#) section of this Guide).

- ✓ Choose materials we can compost or recycle, and avoid styrofoam, plastic wrap & plastic bags.
- ✓ Try to support local businesses, too, and ask them for eco-friendly packaging.
- ✓ If you are serving food, consider making your Zero Waste Event 'BYO' cups, plates and silverware – reusable is always best!
- ✓ Include *Zero Waste Event* or BYO in your marketing and communications.

2. Organize for success: Make sure you have clearly marked bins for recycling and compost, and your people know what a *Zero Waste Event* means to them and your guests. Don't give in to garbage!

- ✓ You can bring bins from another room, so long as you put them back – the University Center has portable bins specifically designed for Compost and Recycle.
- ✓ If you are using unlabeled bins, sign them large and clear: 'Compost' and 'Recycle' (Pro tip: print the [Signs](#) in this Guide).
- ✓ Put the Compost and Recycle bins right next to each other to make a Zero Waste Station – this will encourage conscious choice and increase participation.
- ✓ **Hide the garbage can** way in a corner. If people don't see it, they will instead use the Compost and Recycle bins they do see and learn something in the process. Besides, you won't need it! Label it Landfill to really get people thinking and participating.
- ✓ Educate event staff about Zero Waste and 'What Goes Where' so they are part of the effort. (Pro tip: ask Eco Reps to help train your team! Email [contact.ecoreps@gmail.com](mailto:ecoreps@gmail.com)).

3. Engage: Share what Zero Waste is, how you're doing it and why it is important with event attendees. Make your *Zero Waste Event* a fun challenge everyone can help with - and they can make it happen! You could put a big sign at the door 'Welcome to a Zero Waste Event', make an announcement, or have trained event staff standing by at Zero Waste stations to help answer questions.

4. Measure & Celebrate: Weigh (or count) your bags of Compost, Recycle and actual waste/Landfill at the end of your event. A full bag of compost = 30#; a full bag of recycle =10#. Run some percentages if you like. You will be happily surprised! This is how much you **diverted from the landfill!**

- ✓ Send [Student Leadership and Programming](#) and/or [Sustainable Clark](#) your numbers so they can send you a Zero Waste Certificate and include your data in an annual report!

5. Post-Event: Now, here's where you take some responsibility. After the event, please bring the bags of Compost to the University Center concourse, and leave them right next to the large recycling container by the stairs. This will help out our hard-working custodians and prevent potential odor issues.

What Products to Use & Avoid

The best way to keep garbage out of landfills is to not create any in the first place! Choose to **Reduce** products that aren't entirely necessary like leftovers, straws or plastic party favors. **Reuse** is good zero waste strategy; when possible encourage event attendees to BYO (bring your own) plates, cups and utensils, or provide reusable options. If you can **Recycle** and **Compost** the rest – you are there! Here are common event-type products, in Zero Waste priority:

Your Product	Good...	Best!	NEVER
Plates, bowls	Recyclable plastic Paper (compostable) Bio-based/compostable	Reusable/washable BYO	Styrofoam
Cups, glasses, mugs	Recyclable plastic Paper (compostable) Bio-based/compostable	Reusable/washable BYO	Styrofoam
Eating utensils	Recyclable plastic Saving & reusing plastic Bio-based/compostable	Reusable/washable BYO	Garbage
Napkins	Paper (smaller = better) Undyed & unbleached	Cloth BYO None	Large, thick paper towels
Leftover food	Donated Take home Compost!	No leftovers!	Garbage
Serving Containers & Covers	Tin foil (recyclable) Recyclable containers	Reusable containers	Plastic Wrap Styrofoam
Beverages, cold	Plastic bottles Glass bottles Aluminum cans	Bulk Serving Pitchers Carafes	Single-serving anything is not preferable
Beverages	Coffee Box Plastic-free, compostable tea bags	In-house brewed coffee In-house brewed tea	k-cups
Stirrers	Wood (compostable) Plastic	Reusable spoon	Plastic
Straws	Bio-based/ compostable	None Reusable	Plastic
Snacks (chips, bars, candy, cookies etc)	Family-size bag/box Paper wrapped single servings	Serving bowl & tongs	Plastic wrapped single servings
Condiments (i.e. ketchup, butter, sugar)	Individual servings in recyclable or compostable packaging	Bulk product & reusable utensil (i.e. knife) Reusable pitcher, bottle	Non-recyclable individual serve portions
Publicity	Flyers on repurposed paper	Word of mouth Reusable Banner	Cheap plastic give-aways

Compost & Recycle 'What Goes Where'

COMPOST <i>"if it was ever alive, compost it!"</i>	RECYCLE Plastic + metal + glass	LANDFILL
ALL Food scraps & leftovers ALL Paper Liquids, sauces, condiments Coffee grounds /tea bags Paper cups, paper plates Plastic-lined cups, plates Paper napkins Paper towels Paper wrappers Sugar packets Wooden stirrers Bio-based/compostable utensils Milk & juice cartons Waxed paper Cardboard Newspaper Compostable wraps, bio-based cellophane	Bottles Cans Jars Coffee lids, soda lids Plastic silverware Plastic cups Aluminum foil Foil liners Foil pans Straws Stirrers, plastic Plastic containers Plastic lids and caps Glass jars & bottles All Hard Plastics #1 - #7	Styrofoam cups Styrofoam containers Chip bags Candy wrappers Plastic shopping bags Plastic wrappers Thin plastic liners Saran wrap Plastic film ...Basically, all soft, squishable plastic is landfill...

COMPOST

RECYCLE

