

# ZERO WASTE EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

REDUCE

REUSE

RECYCLE

ROT



*Marin Sanitary Service*  
CONSERVATION — OUR EARTH, OUR MISSION, OUR JOB



## Make Your Special Event or Venue a “Zero Waste” Event

Waste reduction is easy with advance planning & stakeholder engagement.

## What is the definition of a Special Event?

According to CalRecycle, a Special Event is a community, public, commercial, recreational or social event which *may* serve food or drink and *may* require a permit from the Agency. Special Events may include the temporary or periodic use of a public street, publicly owned site or facility, or a public park. Examples of events include fairs, farmer's markets, concerts, outdoor movie events, sporting events, trade shows, community BBQs, school activities, or public speaking events.

At MSS, we realize that all events *regardless* of size have the potential to generate significant waste. As part of the effort to promote Zero Waste in the County of Marin, we developed the following guide to help you implement recycling, reuse, and composting practices so you can have a Zero-Waste event and everyone can contribute and do their part to keep valuable resources out of the landfill regardless of the size of the event.

## KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL ZERO WASTE EVENT PLANNING

### STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

(This could be one person or several vendors, organizations, and individuals)

Get everyone involved. Vendors will generate the majority of waste, which makes them a major stakeholder in your event. As the organizer, you can be in control of the products that are used at your event.

- Advise vendors of recyclable and compostable packaging.
- Encourage waste minimization (Does the vendor need to hand out straws that aren't really needed?)

### FOOD SERVICE

The majority of the waste generated at large events is food or soiled paper, and can be composted. It is essential that food service providers are aware of the Zero Waste goals of your event.

- Donate excess food to local shelters, food banks, or soup kitchens; ExtraFood.org
- Rent equipment like tablecloths or utensils instead of using single use items;
- Serve food buffet style rather than in "box lunch" form or use finger foods, limiting the number of plates required;
- If reusable items are not available, use compostable paper plates and cutlery that can be composted like birch or bamboo. *WMEarthcare, the composter, does not accept bioplastics also called "compostable" plastics.*
- Provide drinks and condiments (water, tea, sugars, ketchup, salad dressings, etc.) in bulk instead of in individual packages and servings or use canned drinks as an alternative;
- Ban polystyrene ("Styrofoam") containers from the event. They cannot be recycled and are banned in some locations in Marin County.

## SITE PLANNING and SORTING STATION PLACEMENT

A site map will allow you to visually consider appropriate locations to place your composting/recycling/landfill stations. Make sure all involved have the map and that it is even accessible to the public if the event is really large.

Strategic placement of sorting stations and clear signage is vital to the success of your resource collection plan.

The GOLDEN RULE of Zero Waste Events: ***Leave no garbage can standing alone.*** Where there is a trash container, there should be a recycling container and if necessary, a compost container.

### Sorting Station Placement

- Keep all types of containers clustered together, in the same order and color coded for easy identification and use.
- Make sure the containers are:
  - ▶ Accessible and conveniently located
  - ▶ Located near food and eating areas
  - ▶ Near entrances and exit points
  - ▶ Close to crowded areas



### Signage

Plenty of signage is essential for successful recycling. Your signs may incorporate simple wording or even images of the different materials that can be placed in the recycling or composting containers.

- Make sure signs are CLEAR. Pictures work well. Too many words and people stop reading.
- Ensure signs are attached to each container:
  - ▶ Composting to green cart
  - ▶ Mixed Bottles & Can Recycling to brown cart
  - ▶ Clean Paper Recycling to blue cart
  - ▶ Landfill to gray/black cart



- Place signs at eye level to catch attention and on the containers for reminders.

## DECORATIONS & GIVE-A-WAYS

Consider the environmental impact of any raffled prizes, give-a-ways, centerpieces, or decorations to be used at the event.

- Limit the number of give-a-ways.
- Make sure all items purchased are reusable, recyclable or compostable.
- Instead of pre-filled goodie bags, allow participants to select only the items they actually want. This will avoid unwanted items finding their way to the trash bin.
- Distribute items to attendees that will help them to reduce waste (e.g. real cloth bags, reusable bottles, native plant seeds, potted plants or pencils for example)

## EDUCATE EQUIP and EMPOWER!

---

Education is a crucial part of a Zero Waste Event. People need to be taught, given the tools, and empowered to do the right thing. It is also good marketing and can be a promotional tool for the event.

EVERYONE at the event needs to know what is recyclable and compostable and where to place these items. The more ways you communicate this, the more successful you will be in reducing waste. Think REDUCE< REUSE< RECYCLE as you go through the list. Below are some suggestions:

- Posters, Signs, and Flags
- Assign volunteers to be at sorting stations
- T-shirts for staff with the recycling logo in addition to your logo
- Press and Media Releases
- Information on tickets and invitations about Zero Waste
- Stamp patrons hands on entry with a recycling logo to keep the goal fresh in their minds
- Regular PA announcements to remind patrons of the Zero Waste goal.

## VOLUNTEERS

---

If possible, enlist volunteers to be “sorting attendants” to educate event participants to place resources in the correct containers. Sorting Attendants may be event planning staff or volunteers or non-profit or student volunteers.

It is also a great initiative to involve the community and promote local groups. Your team of volunteers could include:

- Local students
- Sports teams
- Local businesses
- Community groups and volunteers
- By recruiting and training as many volunteers as possible, you will have a “Zero Waste Management Team” available to assign to various tasks.

Volunteers stationed by your recycling containers can supervise what goes into the bins and will also help to increase public awareness. This will help reduce contamination and increase the amount of waste that is recycled overall.

## ZERO WASTE MANAGEMENT TEAM TRAINING

Emphasize the “training” aspect of learning by doing. Event participants should do the sorting themselves and the Sorting Attendants should verbally direct them when they need some help.

Comments or questions that may engage the participants may include:

- Do you know where this trash goes when it leaves this event?”
- “Do you know where to sort your waste?”
- “Do you have any questions about this zero waste station?”
- “Our goal is to keep valuable resources out of the landfill.”
- “We will compost or recycle all these items.”
- “If you can avoid single use food containers, cups and bags and instead use reusable mugs, containers and bags, you will save valuable resources and prevent unnecessary waste in the landfills.”

## Suggested Timeline for Special Event Planning > 500 people

(this can be modified for smaller groups):

### One Year to Six months prior to event

- ☐ Identify recycling and “greening” goals for your event
- ☐ Determine the materials in the event waste stream
- ☐ Work with MSS to develop a service plan for collection
- ☐ Determine where and who generates the most waste (suppliers, staff, vendors, attendees, etc.)
- ☐ Determine items to recycle and compost (see attached "Compostable Serviceware Product Guide from the County of Marin)
- ☐ Research procurement opportunities (buy durable & reusable)
- ☐ Research the best equipment/containers for collection
- ☐ Identify education/outreach opportunities

### Six to Three months prior to event

- ☐ Purchase recycled content and recyclable products, or require vendors to purchase recycled content and recyclable items
- ☐ Determine which items are recyclable, compostable, or reusable
- ☐ Meet with vendors to discuss recycling and waste reduction opportunities
- ☐ Determine ways to reduce packaging
- ☐ Select and order equipment (bins, stickers, etc.)

- ☐ Research donation of extra food opportunities
  - ☐ Identify staff person to assist in implementing recycling procedures
  - ☐ Organize education and outreach components (i.e. information in event program and vendor packets, press release, signage, etc.)
- 

#### **Two to Three months prior to event**

- ☐ Publicize event greening through displays, media, and promotions
  - ☐ Inform media of event greening program
  - ☐ Order recycling/waste services
  - ☐ Determine who will be collecting and transporting recyclables on the event day
  - ☐ Include recycling procedures in vendor packet
  - ☐ Confirm equipment & outreach orders and drop off schedule
  - ☐ Train staff on recycling procedures
  - ☐ Create diagram of recycling staging area for vendors
- 

#### **Week prior to event**

- ☐ Confirm food donation pick-up
  - ☐ Confirm equipment and outreach delivery
  - ☐ Confirm hauler/recycler schedule
  - ☐ Create signage for recycling bins if not provided by hauler
- 

#### **Day before event**

- ☐ Train staff (can be done day of event)
  - ☐ Distribute recycling procedures to vendors
  - ☐ Strategically place trash, recycling and composting bins next to each other
- 

#### **Day of Event**











- ☐ Monitor waste and recycling stations regularly
  - ☐ Empty containers as needed
  - ☐ Publicize recycling throughout day with PA announcements
- 

#### **After Event**

- ☐ Ensure containers are serviced or removed by MSS
- ☐ Review what procedures did and did not work
- ☐ Evaluate results
- ☐ Write-up recommendations for next event
- ☐ Publicize results of your Zero Waste Event
- ☐ CELEBRATE your success!






# Compostable Serviceware Product Guide

| Image   | ZWM Item # | SKU   | Description  | Link  |
|---|------------|-------|--|---|
|    | 1          | 94078 | Unbleached plant fiber tray - 8" x 6" x 1.5"<br>Microwave and freezer safe, can be used for both hot and cold items. | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94078">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94078</a> |
|    | 2          | 94038 | Bagasse/wheatstraw plate – 10", 3 compartments   | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94038">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94038</a> |
|    | 3          | 94080 | Unbleached plant fiber 2-compartment tray- 8" x 6" x 1.5"  | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94080">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94080</a> |
|    | 4          | 94084 | Unbleached plant fiber 3-compartment tray- 10" x 7.5" x 1.5"   | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94084">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94084</a> |
|  | 5          | 94088 | Unbleached 5 compartment fiber school tray   | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94088">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94088</a> |
|  | 6          | 94035 | Bagasse/wheatstraw plate - 9"  | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94035">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94035</a> |
|  | 7          | 94086 | Unbleached plant fiber boat tray- 6.5" x 5   | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94086">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94086</a> |
|  | 8          | 94074 | Unbleached plant fiber box- 8.8 x 6.8 x 3  | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94074">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94074</a> |
|  | 9          | 94061 | Bagasse/wheatstraw souffle hot cup- 4 oz.  | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94061">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94061</a> |
|  | 10         | 94058 | Unbleached plant fiber bowl - 16 oz.   | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94058">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94058</a> |

| <b>Image</b>  | <b>ZWM Item #</b> | <b>SKU</b>            | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Link</b>   |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
|    | 11                | 94059                 | Lid for unbleached plant fiber bowl - 16 oz. (ZWM item # 10)  | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94059">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94059</a>   |
|    | 12                | 94076                 | Lid For 8.8 x 6.8 fiber boxes (ZWM item # 8)  | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94076">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=94076</a>   |
|    | 13                | 210CVB3               | 6.2" wood cutlery - spoons  | <a href="https://www.goodstartpackaging.com/cart.php?suggest=75708d5f-d5d7-4a69-a1e4-ba019e198784">https://www.goodstartpackaging.com/cart.php?suggest=75708d5f-d5d7-4a69-a1e4-ba019e198784</a>                           |
|    | 14                | Green fork 140        | 5 1/2" wood cutlery forks   | <a href="https://www.perfectstix.com/cutlery/wooden-cutlery-forks/5-1-2-wood-cutlery-forks-box-of-3-000ct.html">https://www.perfectstix.com/cutlery/wooden-cutlery-forks/5-1-2-wood-cutlery-forks-box-of-3-000ct.html</a> |
|  | 15                | U508NU                | White uncoated paper hot/cold cups - 8 Oz<br><br>These are the only disposable cups accepted in our local compost facility. 99% of all other disposable cups have a lining that does not breakdown (including cups from most coffee shops.) | <a href="https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=132846">https://www.fishmansupply.com/store/product.php?id=132846</a>   |
|  | 16                | Paper straws          | Aardvark paper straws – many varieties of paper straws, all made in the USA.  | <a href="https://www.aardvarkstraws.com/">https://www.aardvarkstraws.com/</a>   |
|  | 17                | Snack & sandwich bags | If You Care: FSC and Compostable Certified paper snack and sandwich bags  | <a href="https://www.ifyoucare.com/baking-cooking/snack-sandwich-bags/">https://www.ifyoucare.com/baking-cooking/snack-sandwich-bags/</a>   |



| Image   | ZWM Item # | SKU                 | Description  | Link  |
|---|------------|---------------------|--|---|
|  | 18         | Large sandwich bags | If You Care: FSC and Compostable Certified sub/mini-baguette sandwich bags | <a href="https://www.ifyoucare.com/baking-cooking/snack-sandwich-bags/">https://www.ifyoucare.com/baking-cooking/snack-sandwich-bags/</a> |
|  | N/A        | NP-SC-LN-P          | 100% recycled paper lunch napkins  | <a href="http://www.worldcentric.org/bio-compostables/paper/napkins">http://www.worldcentric.org/bio-compostables/paper/napkins</a>       |
|  | N/A        | PR-SC-14            | WorldCentric compostable 14" round pizza clamshell                         | <a href="https://store.worldcentric.com/14-fiber-pizza-round">https://store.worldcentric.com/14-fiber-pizza-round</a>                     |

*The information provided is for educational purposes only. There are many manufacturers and distributors of these materials.*

*This is not an endorsement from Zero Waste Marin but a guide to get you started using truly compostable serviceware.*

# ZERØWASTEMARIN

---