

Restaurant Waste Reduction

What is Certifiably Green Denver?

The Certifiably Green Denver Program provides education and recognition for environmental achievement. Our free services are available to any business in the City and County of Denver.

Certifiably Green Denver offers:

- Assessments to identify water conservation and energy-efficiency options
- Information and assistance to meet your business needs
- Public recognition for your environmental efforts

Why Participate?

Compliance - Proper management practices help minimize wastes, reduce downtime, and keep you in compliance with regulations.

Cost Savings - Less waste means lower disposal and operating costs. Efficient use of materials, water, and energy saves money.

Public Image - Superior environmental practices affect your image with customers, the community, and regulatory agencies.

Public Recognition!

Certifiably Green Denver publicly recognizes certified businesses through free advertising. This includes Internet listings and advertising in the newspaper, magazines, radio, and water bill inserts. Certified businesses receive a framed certificate and window decal.

Purpose of This Guide

The purpose of this Waste Reduction guide is to assist new and existing food establishment owners and managers with establishing and maintaining a waste reduction program. The guide provides resources and ideas on free services available and measures to take to start greening your operations and your bottom line.

Why Reduce Waste?

- a. Reducing waste makes good business sense and helps conserve the environment for future generations.
- b. Reducing waste supports the City and County of Denver's waste diversion goals and the Climate Action Plan.
- c. Disposing of materials that can be composted or recycled takes up valuable space in landfills. Reducing waste keeps disposal costs down and saves open space in the metro area.
- d. Reduction and recycling saves energy and water resources. Manufacturing goods from recycled materials typically requires less energy and water than producing goods from raw materials.
- e. Waste reduction and recycling of paper products allows more trees to remain in the forest, where they continue to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, provide habitat for animals and prevent soil erosion.
- f. Composting reduces emissions from landfills and creates a valuable product. Food scraps, plant trimmings, and soiled paper and other compostables are turned into nutrient-rich soil that in turn is used to grow food.

Only a few items/materials in a typical restaurant cannot be diverted and therefore must be disposed of in a landfill:

- Latex gloves for food preparation;
- Plastic wrap for sealing food items in containers to keep them fresh;
- Styrofoam packaging; and
- Broken ceramic and Pyrex pans, dishes and cups.

Four Steps to Starting Your Waste Reduction Program

Step 1: Check the records.

- Review your garbage bill and look to find out how much waste is being removed from your facility on a weekly or monthly basis and calculate your total annual disposal cost.
- Review purchasing records. This will help you gain perspective of what and how much material is brought into your facility.

Step 2: Designate an audit team.

Involve members from all areas of the facility including front of the house, back of the house, maintenance and management. Successful conservation programs need champions to inspire employees and lead the charge.

Step 3: Gather Supplies

Rubber gloves, plastic bags, tarps and a scale may be needed depending on the thoroughness of the waste being audited.

Step 4: Conduct the waste audit.

- Place a large plastic sheet of tarp on the floor and spread a typical day's worth of your garbage on it. Sort the material by type (e.g. paper, plastic bottles, glass, food scraps). This may need to be conducted in each area of the restaurant, and may take a few days.
- Record the type of material found as well as the point of generation. Include an estimate of each material's percentage of the waste stream. If possible, weigh the materials on a scale to provide a more accurate measurement.
- Recycle or dispose of the materials once all the materials have been recorded and weighed.

Waste Audit Follow-Up

Once you complete the waste audit and have a better understanding of what waste is generated, you are ready to determine the best ways to reduce, reuse and recycle.

1. **Reduce and reuse:** With information gathered from the waste audit, look over purchasing records again. Could you adjust processes to reduce waste or reuse materials (e.g., eliminating excess packaging)?
2. **Recycle:** Make sure your recycling bin is the right size and picked up at an appropriate frequency to maximize your recycling opportunity.
3. **Compost:** On average, a single restaurant disposes of more than 50 tons of organic waste material each year. Many Denver restaurants are now utilizing commercial composting services to reduce their burden on landfills.

More Waste Reduction Quick Tips

With proper purchasing and handling and careful preparation and storage, food service establishments can reduce waste and save money.

- Rehydrate vegetables that have wilted by trimming the bottom of the stalk and placing in warm water (100° F) for about 15-20 minutes.
- Adjust inventory levels and rotate perishable stock at every delivery to minimize waste due to spoilage.
- Use hourly or daily production charts to minimize over prepping.
- Establish a package take back program with your suppliers.
- Calibrate all refrigeration and cooking equipment to minimize overcooking and spoilage.

Helpful Resources

See the Certifiably Green Denver website for more helpful resource sheets:

www.denvergov.org/CGD

For help on finding a recycling program, visit :

www.denvergov.org/DenverRecycles

The EPA's Food Recovery Challenge helps businesses reduce wasted food. Visit: www.epa.gov/foodrecoverychallenge

Visit us on Facebook!

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