



SUSTAINABLE EVENTS HANDBOOK

About

In the City of Denver, we are a unique community of people who love outdoor spaces, appreciate a wide variety of events that take place in parks, and who are passionate about supporting long-term sustainability and longevity of our community. It's up to us to re-imagine, re-think and offer ways to help reduce the impact we put on our natural resources.

This guide was created as a “living document” to help us re-think the amount of waste, energy, materials, and money consumed during the course of an event. By tracking the evolution of “best practices” we want to make sure we stay proactive in terms of protecting, enhancing, and assuring longevity of our parks.

If you have feedback or ideas for best management practices, we would love to hear from you.

Please send your ideas to:

Susan Renaud

Program Manager – Certifiably Green Denver

Email: Susan.Renaud@denvergov.org

Phone: 720.865.5539

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EVENT PLANNING

Logistics plan, mission
statement, publicity

The event planning stage determines purchasing, organizational and event management decisions. At this stage there is an opportunity to look at organizational inefficiencies, sustainable alternatives to products, or event re-evaluate your traditional event management practices.

Logistics Plan

Logistics Plan is a written document that includes a map and a written description of how the event is designed to “flow.”

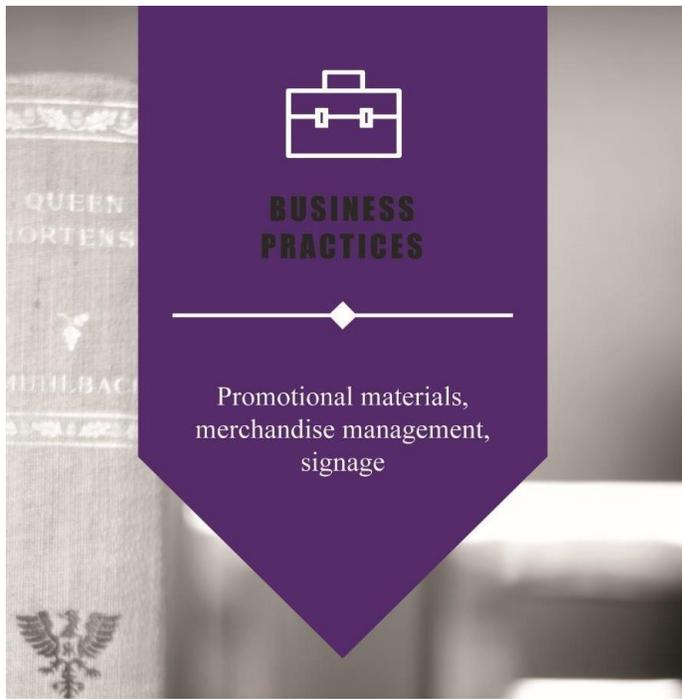
When planning a sustainable event consider the following:

- Distance from public transit stops, or parking so that attendees can conveniently and safely access those spaces.
- If the parking is arranged inside the park, plan for proper traffic flow, so there are no traffic jams created.

Logistics plan should provide information on vendor, port-o-potty, trash, recycling set up, emergency access points and exits, and a first aid station location.

Mission Statement

If you make efforts to be a responsible business, fully commit to sustainability, or maybe just focus on becoming a zero-waste event, you should let everyone know about it. Communities across the U.S. tend to show higher support to businesses that care about their present and future impact. One way to do it is to incorporate it in your mission statement to let everyone know that you assume responsibility.



Promotional and marketing materials represent a significant part of an event's budget, and they also have the potential to generate lots of waste. When planning your campaign, try to only use the most cost-effective types of communication applicable to your event and audience.

Registration Materials

- Consider digital event invitations and digital registration.
- Make event schedule and other relevant information available via website, phone app, or QR code.
- Purchase badges, holders, lanyards, ribbons, registration bags and other items that are reusable, biodegradable or made of post-consumer recycled content.
- Consider social media participation badges that can be easily shared online instead of a physical goody bag item.
- Donate reusable leftover registration and exhibit materials.
- Collect badges, holders, lanyards, ribbons, and other items for reuse or recycling.

Graphics/Signage

- Use display graphics/signage that don't need frequent content updates or use easily updatable signage such as those requiring only printed inserts or modification (chalk boards).
- Consider renting directional signs.
- Repurpose or recycle graphics/signage after use.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use biodegradable foam board.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Substitute needed signage by strategically placing volunteers throughout the event space to direct attendees.

Display Structure

- Utilize a display made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, bio-based, compostable.)
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location.
- Use a reusable structure.

Printed Materials

- Reduce the amount or replace printed material.
- Use paper and card stock made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine-free. Consider using paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Chlorine Free Products Association.
- Use soy or EcoSmart certified inks. Consider additional green printing certifications such as Green Globe.
- Distributed materials should be recyclable and include the recycling logo.
- Purchase materials that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location.

Ideas to Reduce or Replace Printed Media

- Use social media or email distribution systems to share information.
- Include a QR code on display signage linking to a website.
- Use single sheet, double-sided pages for printed material.
- Consider multi-use for generic business cards featuring company website address, QR codes linking to information or appropriate instructions to access information, and ensure your website lists your staff's contact information.

Promotional Items

- Limit the number of items distributed.
- Select items that have a use or purpose beyond the event.
- Use items made from sustainable materials (recycled content, sustainably produced, bio-based, compostable.)
- Purchase items that are sourced locally, such as produced within 100 km of the event location. In addition, a minimum percentage can be set for local sourcing.



Waste generation is the number one concern when it comes to events. Current best waste management practices include zero-waste station set up, which are essentially tri-bin stations with a designated waste, compost, and recycle collection receptacles – clearly labeled and/or manned by staff.

Anti-Litter Messaging

Include an anti-litter message and promote it before, during, and after the event. Involve your guests and attendees.

Sample Message: “[Event Name] is dedicated to keeping our environment clean and green. Join us in our commitment to ensuring a sustainable future for the City of Denver, our [event type of business name] and the planet.

We can’t keep our [walk/festival/etc.] clean without your help! It’s super easy to assist in preserving the natural beauty of our parks. Practice No Trace ethics during the event by following a few simple steps:

- 1. Energy efficient and safe travel. Bike, car-pool, or taxi-like service can help us reduce our event footprint and make sure you get home safe (for the events that sell alcohol).*
- 2. Pack in – pack out. Pack your picnic in reusable containers so you don’t have to accumulate trash.*
- 3. Recycle or compost whenever possible. Be mindful of how you dispose of your trash.*
- 4. No single-use water bottles. Americans use roughly 50 billion plastic water bottles a year, and nearly 80% of them end up in the landfill. One of the easiest ways to cut down on waste is by using a reusable water bottle. Bring your own or purchase one from one of our vendors and use it at our hydration stations set throughout the park.*
- 5. Be respectful of wildlife and others. Do not feed your food scraps to wildlife; keep it wild.”*

Other Waste Management Practices

- Determine a baseline for waste generation and diversion at the facility, and set a measurable recycling rate. A zero waste event goal is at least 90%.
- Offer training to appropriate staff to ensure success of recycling efforts.
- Provide recycling and co-locate with trash bins.
- Collect cardboard, magazines, mixed paper (including junk mail) and newspaper. At some parks, recycling receptacles and dumpsters are available for use. Talk to your event facilitator for more details.
- Provide clear signage for trash stations. A few examples:
 - http://www.ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/guidelines/ecocycle_recycling-guidelines_web.pdf
 - http://www.ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/guidelines/ecocycle_recycling-contaminants_web.pdf
 - http://www.ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/guidelines/ecocycle_landfill-guidelines_web.pdf
- Track all waste streams (compost, recycling, trash) and report waste diversion following the event when applicable.
 - Make sure your trash and recycling vendor is aware that you will need these metrics when you sign your contract.
- Provide man-managed composting bins.
- Reduce vendor handouts/goody bags/unnecessary printed materials at the event by 10% and only select items that have a use or purpose.
- Include a clause in your vendor agreements stating that they are not to bring printed materials or swag that will likely end up in the waste stream.
- Hire a waste management company to handle recycling/composting/data collection, analysis and reporting such as Zero Hero or Eco-Cycle.

Waste Hauler	Single Stream Recycling	Compost	Paper and Cardboard Only
Alpine Waste & Recycling www.alpinewaste.com	X	X	
Republic Services www.republicservices.com			X
Tri-R Recycling 303-829-0952			X (co-mingled mixed paper, newspaper and cardboard)
Waste Management www.wm.com/small-business	X	X	
Waste Connections of Colorado www.wasteconnectionsofcolorado.com	X		
A1 Organics www.a1organics.com		X	
Pedro's Planet www.pedrosplanet.com *If your company purchases office supplies from Pedro's Planet, they will provide free recycling pick up for aluminum, mixed paper, phonebooks, catalogues, ink cartridges and cell phones	X	X	

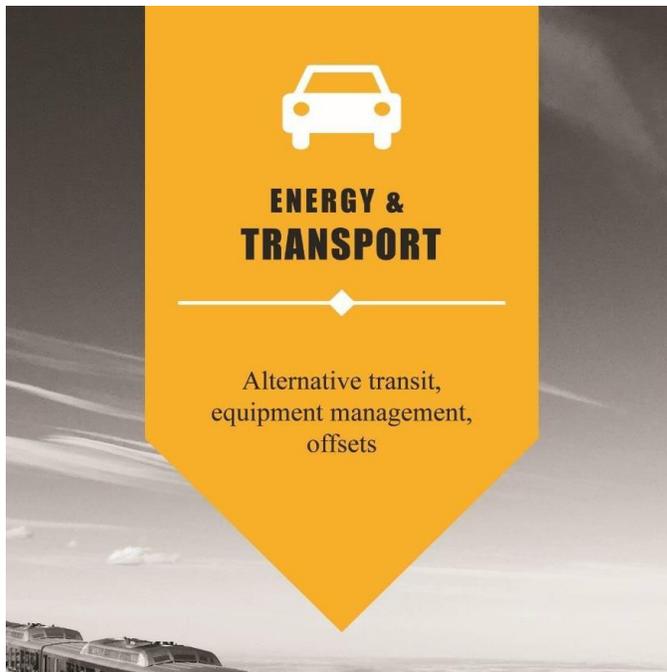


FOOD & PACKAGING

Food purchasing,
procurement, supply chain,
packaging materials

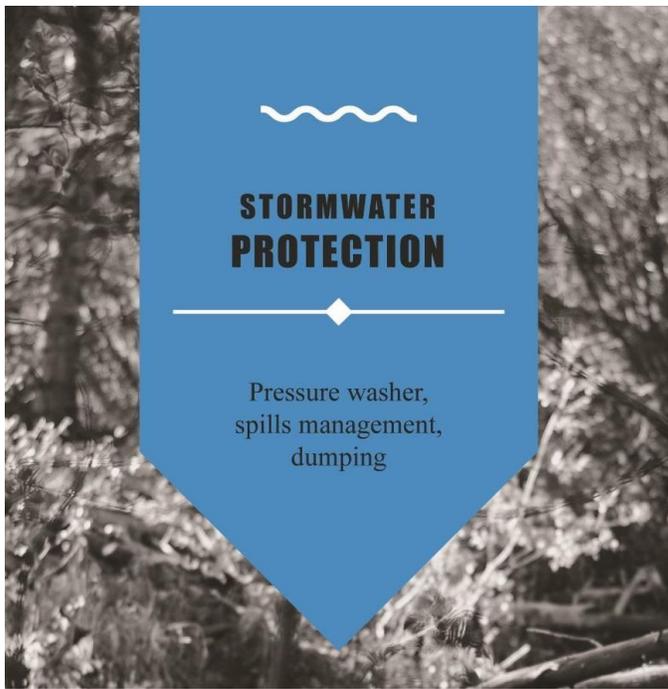


- Find a vendor who is committed to sustainability by procuring organic, locally grown and produced, fair-trade, and cage-free.
- Offer vegetarian and vegan food options. Farming and processing of plants leaves a smaller footprint on the environment.
- Showcase and promote local food and beverage products where possible. Purchase food and beverages that are sourced locally, such as produced within 50km of the event location.
- Utilize reusable service items such as china, cloth napkins and tablecloths.
- Offer bulk condiments.
- Ensure that any single-use service-ware or food containers are compostable and napkins/paper products are processed chlorine-free.
- Consider garnishes, centerpieces, and decorations that can be eaten, donated, recycled, reused, planted or composted.
- Print paper menus and other printed materials on a single sheet, double-sided page made of recycled content with preference for paper with post-consumer content and processed chlorine free paper and soy inks.
- Procure beverages such as tea, coffee or hot chocolate that are at least one of the following: Certified Organic, Bird Friendly, or Fair Trade Certified.
- Donate food leftovers to local organizations or ask staff to take it home.
- Collect pre and post-consumer food scraps and related non-food compostable items.
- Recycle fats, oils and greases.



- Promote RTD/light rail/carpooling. Include maps and public transit info such as schedule and cost into your marketing materials.
 - <http://www.rtd-denver.com/lightrail.shtml>
- Provide bike corrals:
 - Colorado Barricade
<https://coloradobarricade.com/our-services/special-events/>

- Promote public transit or carpooling:
 - Use RTD and light rail logos on marketing materials.
 - When telling participants how to get to the event, promote alternative transportation.
 - Set up a ride-share and carpool webpage
 - Include maps and public transit info such as schedule and cost into your marketing materials
 - <http://www.rtd-denver.com/lightrail.shtml>
- Educate staff vendors and volunteers and require that all non-essential lighting equipment and machines be turned off and unplugged when not in use and after hours.
- Minimize lighting and prohibit outdoor heaters.
- Purchase carbon offsets:
 - <https://www.terrapass.com/>
 - <http://www.nativeenergy.com/buy-now>
 - <http://www.renewablechoice.com/services/carbon-offsets/>
- Use low emission or biofuel generators:
 - <https://www.sunbeltrentals.com/equipment/subcat/782/generators/>
 - http://www.cat.com/en_US/products/new/power-systems/electric-power-generation.html
- Unplug all electronic equipment at the close of each day (except for refrigeration of perishable products).



Pressure Washing

Avoid practices where you use water that later enters the storm drains. For instance, pressure washing in outdoor areas of any vehicles or equipment. Most of these practices are now considered to be “illegal dumping” of non-storm water to the storm drain.

Spills

Prevent spills by educating vendors and staff on proper spill response procedure. Small spills can have cumulative effects that add up to a significant source of potential pollutants in storm water discharge. The best approach by far is to prevent spills and leaks.

The basic procedures should emphasize that spills be cleaned up promptly, not allowed to evaporate. Otherwise, pollutants remain on the pavement and may be washed to the storm drains with the next rain, or will remain in the soil to become a possible groundwater pollutant. If the spill is on an unpaved surface, determine whether you need to remove the contaminated soil to prevent it from being a source of future storm water pollutants.

Small spills are those that can be wiped up with a shop rag.

Medium-sized spills are too large to wipe up with a rag and require more attention. Contain and soak up the liquid using dry absorbent material such as vermiculite, specially prepared sawdust, or “cat litter.”

Large spills must be contained and then cleaned up. For spills of food waste or other non-hazardous liquids, take steps to contain and clean up the liquid, and minimize the wash water used in cleanup.

If a spill over 50 gal occurs, immediately contact Environmental Health by dialing 24/7 emergency number: 303.495.8376

Additional Resources

- **Certiably Green Denver:** <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/environmental-health/environmental-quality/certiably-green-denver.html>
- **Love This Place Challenge:** <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/office-of-sustainability/do-your-part.html>
- **Compost Guidelines:** http://www.ecocycle.org/files/pdfs/Business%20Dept/Eco-Cycle_business-compost-guidelines_web.pdf

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