

Make your neighborhood event zero waste!

Whether you are having a barbecue with a few neighbors, or you are hosting a family reunion or neighborhood block party – every bit of waste reduction and recycling at your event will make an impact. With some planning and communication with your guests ahead of time, these simple tips can help you reduce waste at your event- or in your home, every day!

Reduce

- **Avoid individually wrapped single serving items.** You can serve bite-size or finger foods that require no utensils or choose entrées that can be served in large containers like pasta in a large bowl or a platter of sub sandwiches.
- **Plan ahead to avoid wasting food.** Accurately estimate attendance when preparing food or placing orders for catering. Consider hosting a potluck and encouraging your guests to bring the leftovers home with them in reusable containers. If you're keeping the leftovers, be sure to store them properly so you can eat them later.

Reuse

- **Provide reusable items,** or encourage participants to bring their own. Silverware, glasses or mugs, and plates can be washed and reused. Cloth napkins and tablecloths can be used instead of paper. Serve beverages in glasses rather than single-serving, one-use bottles or cans.
- **Use materials with recycled content.** If using reusable items is not possible, paper items are more likely to be made out of recycled content than plastic materials.

Recycle

- **Use easily recyclable items.** Aluminum cans and glass bottles are valuable and can be made into cans and bottles over and over again. Avoid plastics, especially plastics that are not recyclable. Only plastic bottles (marked with #1 and #2) can be recycled through most curbside recycling programs. Non-recyclable plastics include plastic tubs, plastic wraps, plastic cups, and plastic spoons, knives, and forks. Some of these plastics may be recyclable through special drop-off programs, but must be collected separately. If you live in a city where Eureka Recycling provides curbside recycling, you can recycle your milk cartons and juice boxes, too!



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www.eurekarecycling.org

Our mission is to reduce waste today through innovative resource management and to reach a waste-free tomorrow by demonstrating that waste is preventable, not inevitable.

An affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.

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Make Dirt, Not Waste! Compost at your event.

- **Compost your food waste.** If you have a backyard compost bin, this is an easy way to reduce waste. You can compost food waste like fruit and vegetable peelings, stale bread and pasta and even some non-recyclable paper products like napkins or paper towels. Meat, dairy and greasy foods should not be put in a backyard bin.
- **If you don't compost, consider starting now,** or talk to a neighbor who may be able to collect the food waste and compost in their bin. Contact Eureka Recycling for backyard composting resources or visit our composting website at www.makedirtnotwaste.org for details to get you started today!
- **Compostable bio-based cups, plates and serviceware are now available** to replace disposable plastic products made from petroleum. However, the environmental benefits of these products are not completely realized if they are burned in an incinerator or buried in a landfill instead of being composted. Certified compostable products will completely biodegrade when properly composted in a commercial-scale composting facility. *These products are not designed to break down in a backyard compost bin.* Commercial-scale composting facilities are very limited and most Twin Cities residents do not have access to this type of composting at this time. Reusable plates, cups and serviceware are always a better environmental choice.



Communicate with your guests at the event and monitor your efforts

- **Provide containers for recycling and compost and trash, if needed.** Limit the number of trash containers and make sure that no trash container stands alone. Be sure they are next to clearly labeled recycling and composting containers so that it is easy for people to make the choice to recycle and compost.
- **Clearly label containers at all locations.** Pictures, lists and symbols in combination are most effective. You really can't say it enough! Instead of just the word "Cans," a container labeled "Cans" with a picture of a can and the "chasing arrows" recycling symbol is more likely to be used. And, kids that can't read will know what to do, too!
- **Place containers in obvious places where they will be visible and accessible.** Containers near eating areas and exits often do the trick!
- **Announce your waste reduction efforts to your guests.** Recycling, composting and waste reduction practices vary from city to city and sometimes from house to house, so briefly explain what your guests can compost and recycle at your event.
- **Monitor your recycling and trash containers.** Some guests will inevitably misuse the containers by placing trash in recycling containers or recycling in trash containers. Keep an eye on your containers to make sure items are going in the right place. Ask kids at the event to help with this—they are great at getting others to recycle and compost!

