

Zero Waste Event Guide



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1 Evaluate Needs

Understand what materials your event will generate and identify opportunities to reduce waste.

- Type of event (concert vs. small meeting)
- Expected Attendance
- Location (indoor vs outdoor)
- Food (buffet, food trucks, pre-packaged?)
- Service ware (opt for reusable or certified compostable)
- Giveaways and decor (choose reusable/sustainable)
- Volunteer availability if compost is included

2 Set Goals

Create clear, attainable waste reduction goals to guide vendors, volunteers, and attendees.

- Be realistic with budget and resources
- Use goals to motivate and measure success
- Share goals early and often

3 Determine Layout

Proper bin placement boosts participation and reduces contamination.

- **Always pair bins** (Landfill/Recycle/Compost)
- Place bins at entrances, exits, near food, and in high-traffic areas.
- For large events, create a Zero Waste Bin Map for setup teams.

4 Communicate

Clear messaging ensures everyone supports your zero waste efforts.

- **Inform vendors about your zero waste requirements**
- Train volunteers on sorting and bin monitoring
- Use clear, image-based signage at all waste stations

5 Implement Zero Waste

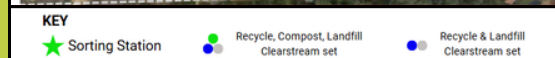
Now make it happen!

- Set up bins with clear signage (Landfill/Recycle/Compost)
- Monitor and maintain stations (swap bags as needed)
- Ensure proper disposal:
 - **Recycling must be emptied loose - never bagged**
 - **Plastic bags go in landfill dumpster only**

Minimize waste. Maximize impact. Plan smarter with Waste Reduction & Recycling.



Waste Station Map



? Need Help Planning?

WRR can help with:

- Event bin requests (Clearstreams)
- Compostable product sourcing
- Vendor and signage guidance
- Waste station setup advice



Contact us at
recycling@ncsu.edu or
919.515.9421

What are Clearstreams?

A clearstream is a collapsible bin used for event waste. It includes a lightweight metal frame which holds a bag, a labelled plastic lid, and upon request, signage identifying items to landfill, recycle, or compost.

How do I reserve Clearstreams?

If you are hosting an event that will create waste, please fill out our Request Service form at least 3 business days in advance to request clearstreams. Clearstream requests are free of charge for events hosted by NC State Departments and Student Organizations.

Event Staff & Volunteers are Responsible for:

- Setting up the clearstreams ([Instructions](#)).
- Emptying any clearstreams that fill during the event
- Informing everyone at your event that it is Zero Waste and to sort their waste into the correct bin ([Sorting Guide](#)).
- Ensuring there is no contamination
- Breaking down all clearstreams and placing them back in the cart in the same location they were dropped off and locking back up
- Placing all generated waste into the appropriate dumpsters

Have additional
questions?
Visit our
website at
recycling.ncsu.edu
or contact Waste
Reduction &
Recycling at
recycling@ncsu.edu
or 919.515.9421



Unlocking Your Clearstream Set

Step 1

Input Code
into Lock



Step 2

Push Down and Lock
Should Spring Open

Step 1 Open frame and pull one side of the bag through the opening.



Step 2 Fold bag over the top of the frame, catching the edge and pulling tight.



Step 3 Repeat on the other side.



Step 4 Open the frame so both ends of the bag are secured to the frame.



Step 5 Place the corresponding lids on top.



Make sure bag colors match the lids!

HOW DO I SORT MY WASTE?

LANDFILL



Cups, Lids, & Straws, Plastic & Styrofoam To-Go Containers, Utensils, Plastic Food Wrappers and Film*, Gloves

MIXED RECYCLING



Cardboard, Paper, Cans, Glass, Plastic Tubs, Jugs, Bottles, & Jars

COMPOST



All Food Scraps, Paper Towels, Napkins, Pizza boxes, Coffee Grounds, Tea bags, Wooden stir sticks, Floral trimmings & leaves, & Compostable Service Ware



*Plastic bags can be recycled in select locations on campus and in many grocery stores. Questions about specific items? Visit our website at recycling.ncsu.edu or contact Waste Reduction & Recycling at recycling@ncsu.edu or 919.515.9421

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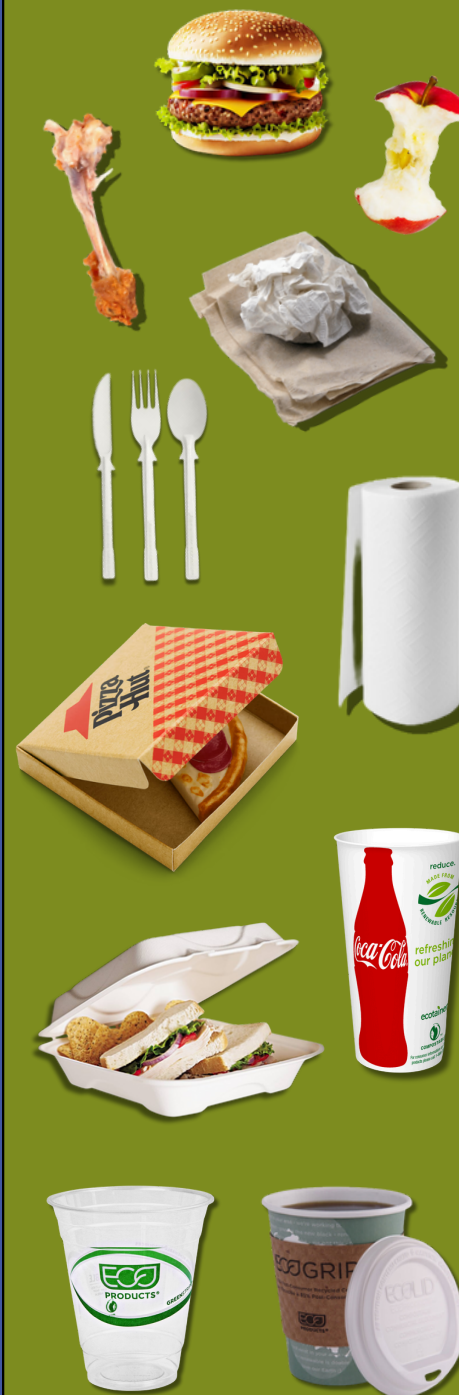
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Compostable Serviceware

What are the benefits?

- Help divert waste from the landfill
- Contribute to NC State's closed-loop composting and circular economy initiatives
- Promote your event as a Zero Waste Event

Compostable Serviceware Available for Purchase from WRR:

Cold Cup
12 oz



\$1.00
set of 10

Hot Cup
12 oz



\$1.00
set of 10

Hot Cup
Lid



\$0.85
set of 10

Plate
9 inch



\$1.10
set of 10

Plate
7 inch



\$0.80
set of 10

Bowls
12 oz



\$1.00
set of 10

Forks



\$0.60
set of 10

Spoons



\$0.60
set of 10

Knives



\$0.60
set of 10

Napkins



\$0.45
set of 10

By following our sourcing guidelines when purchasing food service products, you are taking the *first step* needed to help NC State achieve it's 70% waste diversion goal. Our own compost facility transforms organic waste from campus into valuable material that lives a circular life, thus closing the loop.

Certifications

Look for one of these certifications during purchasing.

BPI Certified



Compost Manufacturing Alliance Approved



Most Preferred Sourcing

Look for products made up of molded plant fiber, bagasse, sugar cane, bamboo, balsa wood, wheat straw, palm leaf, wood, paper, PHA or PLA (plant-based) compostable plastic (PLA #7)



AVOID

It is not recommended to source products made partially or entirely of plastic or styrofoam such as plastic to-go containers, cups, lids, cutlery, condiment cups, stir sticks, styrofoam cups and to-go containers. Plastic is 85% of contamination at compost facilities!



1. Reduce at the source

The most preferred method is providing **reusable serviceware** at your events. Think before you buy and decline what you don't need. Can you buy this second hand or borrow it? Is there a more sustainable option with less packaging?

2. Reuse

Bring your own everything!
Water bottles, mugs, utensils,
bags, and to-go containers.



3. Recycle/Compost

When creating waste is unavoidable, choose responsibly sourced materials and **dispose of them properly**. For example, look for **certified compostable products** whenever possible. Need compostable supplies for your next event?

Check our [Compostable Products Guide](#) and order what you need through our Request Service form! This is a billable service payable by department account or University Invoice. Have additional questions? Reach out - we're happy to help!

