

# Reducing Waste for Consumer Shows



## SECTION 1: PRE-EVENT PLANNING

### COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

- Engage vendors, exhibitors, and contractors early to integrate waste reduction strategies. Clarify expectations regarding reusable materials, rental and reusable decors, avoiding single-use items, and sorting waste properly. A vendor email can help.
- Share the venue's waste management plan, emphasizing proper waste sorting and disposal (Tip: follow waste bins signage). Include waste as a topic in planning meetings.
- Promote digital resources over printed materials to minimize paper waste. Share handouts, agendas, and programs electronically.
- Plan for leftover materials—reuse, donate, or recycle rather than discard.



Our venues donated 7,580 kg of surplus food in 2024!

### GIVEAWAYS & SIGNAGE

- Use digital signage. Design event signage, banners, and displays for future use. If printing, opt for generic banners with no dates or event specific references so they can be reused.
- Print on 100% recyclable materials i.e. DIPSA (available through GES)
- Ask vendors to eliminate promotional swag likely to be discarded; consider digital content, experience-based giveaways, or reusable/consumable items.
- Prioritize reusable or recyclable materials for signage, packaging, and promotional items. Collect and store reusable signs and marketing materials to support a “pack it in, pack it out” system.
- Reduce packaging waste by opting for reusable or minimal-packaging options. Check if your vendors, food suppliers, decorators, and merchandisers can participate.
- Use digital invitations, agendas and event platforms to share information, eliminating unnecessary paper handouts and table toppers.

### FOOD & BEVERAGE WASTE REDUCTION

- Use reusable wares where possible. If unavoidable, ensure single-use items are 100% compostable and fiber-based. Vendors should label compostable and recyclable products.
- Offer disposable items (e.g., straws, stirrers, sleeves) only upon request. Ask if food vendors and exhibitors about serving options that limit disposable wares, such as for finger foods that don't require utensils.
- Request exhibitors to reduce non-essential packaging for single-use food portions
- Use bulk condiment dispensers instead of single-serve packets.
- Set up water refill stations and encourage reusable bottles over disposable cups or plastic bottles.
- Consider a system where attendees can reuse sampling cups/vessels instead of taking a new disposable one at each booth.
- Determine if vendors would require compost or recycling bins for their waste and coordinate with the venue in advance.
- Partner with Edmonton Food Bank's Second Helping Program or local charities to donate surplus food.

## SECTION 2: EVENT OPERATIONS

### MOVE-IN & MOVE-OUT

- Use designated recycling and waste bins. Ensure vendors, contractors, and staff separate recyclables like soft plastics, cardboard, and paper.
- Avoid “dump and dash.” — If unsure where to place something, ask a venue representative.
- Request the exhibitors and vendors to specify disposal needs i.e. recycling bins for paper, compost bins for food waste, etc.) in advance.

### WASTE SORTING & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Clearly labelled three-sorter bins are available throughout the venue. Follow signage for proper waste sorting.
- Encourage attendees to bring reusable bottles for water refill stations.

### MONITORING & COMPLIANCE

- Conduct waste compliance checks with vendors and contractors during setup and breakdown.
- Address any concerns preventing exhibitors and vendors from participating in waste reduction.

### VENDOR EXPECTATION

- Prohibit individual waste bins at booths; public waste sorters should be used. Vendors needing back-of-house waste bins (recycling, compost) must pre-arrange with the venue and ensure proper sorting.
- Require vendors to use recyclable, reusable, or 100% certified compostable materials.
- Ask rental companies, merchandisers, and vendors to use into reusable or minimal packaging.
- Ensure proper sorting of disposal materials.

## SECTION 3: POST-EVENT

### LEFTOVER MATERIALS

- Plan for disposal, reuse, or recycling of booth and event materials- landfill should be the last option. Inform venue representatives if assistance is needed.
- Participate in the community donation and reuse program for items like leftover books/magazines, clothing, decor, craft supplies, and office materials.
- Promote a “pack it in, pack it out” approach. Exhibitors must remove items that do not fit within the venue's waste diversion streams.

### IMPACT ASSESSMENT & COMMUNICATION

- Evaluate waste reduction success and gather feedback for improvement.
- Recognize vendors and stakeholders who contributed to waste reduction efforts through social media and event communications.
- Consider waste reduction requirements in vendor contracts.

By working together, we can make events more sustainable, reducing environmental impact while creating meaningful experiences. Let's make a difference.



We are working to divert over 90% of event waste from the landfill, and we need your help to achieve this goal. This guide outlines how you can reduce waste at each stage in planning and delivering your event.



**PAPER AND CARDBOARD**  
Paper, Envelopes, Newspaper, Brochures, Cardboard, Cup Cozies



**ORGANIC WASTE**  
Food Scraps, Tea Bags, Paper Towels & Napkins, Paper Food Wrap & Containers, Eco-Product Cutlery, Eco-Product Cups



**RECYCLE (EMPTY AND DRY)**  
Bottles, Cans, Cartons, Juice Boxes (put straws in garbage), Milk Jugs



**WASTE LANDFILL WASTE**  
Styrofoam, Non-Compostable Coffee Cups & Lids, Plastic Bags & Wrappers