

# Zero Waste Event Manual

Looking at planning and implementing a **Zero Waste** strategy for your event can seem a bit overwhelming. This manual is here to take away the stress and guide you to planning and executing a successful event.

*Insuring everyone involved in the event is on board is essential to your success. Before you start, take a look at the Zero Waste Philosophy in the Appendix and get copies out to everyone on your planning committee. Zero Waste Management is more than just another way to manage your trash, and requires an understanding and commitment by everyone involved!*

First let's look at quick and easy ways to green your party or event - these basics are also the foundation for implementing a zero waste strategy.

**Reduce, Reduce, Reduce More, Reuse and then Recycle!**

## Waste Prevention

Having a successful event does not just include the collection of recyclables and compostables at the event but an initial effort to eliminate waste before it begins. Foregoing a wasteful material means less to collect or throw away later. For example, instead of serving plate lunches in boxes, why not try reusable / washable plates. Prevention is a very significant way of saving money and the environment.

## Reduce

- First, plan on minimizing any waste you might generate.
- Explore ways you can purchase your foods or goods in ways that create the least amount of discards
- Buy only necessary items.
- Look at bulk buying options to decrease packaging issues.
- Request that those who are donating items keep the packaging at a minimum, and bring items in reusable or recyclable containers.

## Reuse

- Use washable plates, glasses, utensils and service ware.
- Use cloth napkins and tablecloths if possible
- Wash and save aluminum trays & pans for your next event

## Recycle

- Identify and recycle everything you can.
- Reserve some blue County recycling cans to collect the HI-5 containers,
- Capture any aluminum foil and aluminum trays that can't be rinsed and reused
- Separate and flatten all your cardboard boxes.
- If you have cut flowers, banana stumps, or other vegetative decorations keep them separate and compost them or haul them to the green-waste drop at your local transfer station.

## Maximizing Diversion Through Composting

### Managing Foodwaste and Compostable Food Service Ware



The easiest way to maximize diversion through composting is to use compostable plates, utensils and cups (all are available made from bagass, or corn or potato starch). That way all your food, plates, napkins, etc can be simply dumped in a single bin.



# Planning Basics

The information below includes important aspects of setting up a successful Zero Waste Event. In addition to listing everything we have incorporated all of these variables in the Planning Worksheets.

**Zero Waste Kauai can also assist you in developing and implementing your plan. We provide simple pre-planning consultation at no charge and can provide additional in depth assistance and on-site coordination for a fee. Check out our services and fees in the appendix.**

## Pre-Planning Includes Many Variables And Is The Key To Creating Success Or Frustration

### **SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES TO CONSIDER:**

**When (date & time)**

**Where (location – site map / layout)**

**How many people**

**Menu (food & beverages)**

**Food Service Ware**

**Estimated Volume of Waste**

**Trash**

**Recyclables (beverage containers, cardboard, other)**

**Compostables**

**Number of Zero Waste Stations**

**Number of Monitors or Volunteers**

**Zero Waste Team Leader**

**Disposal or Hauling Requirements**

## **Establishing Goals – Creating a Zero Waste Plan**

- If this is your first year, How much do you hope to divert?
- If you've done this before, what can you do better this year to improve diversion?
- When do you think you'll be ready to maximize diversion?

## Developing Estimates

Before you start try to estimate how much trash you may be generating. If this is regular event, try to get the records from last year. If not a rough estimate is about 0.2 to 0.4 cubic feet per person (27 cubic feet = 1 cubic yard), but that can vary widely based on the size of the event, the duration, the amount and type of food served, the packaging (cardboard) generated by the vendors, and the amount of green waste used as decorations. Until you've got some real data it's always best to over- estimate.

### Here are some examples from past events

#### Taste of Hawaii 2014 – 82% Diversion

1,600 to 1,800 people, 30 to 40 vendors, Unlimited food and beverage  
Good volunteer monitoring, problems with vendor cooperation  
Compostables 25 cy – Recyclables 5 cy- Trash 7 cy

#### Mayor's Fundraiser 2014 – 91% Diversion!

1,200 people, Catered buffet, all beverages in cups  
Good monitoring, complete control over compostables  
Compostables 40 bags / 4.5 cy - Recyclables 0.3 cy (loose)  
Trash 4 bags / .5 cy

#### Private Birthday Party – 92% Diversion

50 to 75 people, Catered main dish + pot luck, Lots of beer & wine  
No monitoring, everything was either compostable or recyclable.  
Compostables 4 bags – Recyclables 1.5 bags – Trash .5 bag

#### KCC Culinary Arts Festival – 85% Diversion

1,500 people, Catered by Culinary Arts Students, HEAVY Breakfast  
Great monitoring by students, number of vendor issues (non-compostables)  
Compostables - 50 bags + 1 cy of wet cdbd, Recyclables >1 bag, Trash 10 bags

#### Mayorathon – 85% Diversion

1,300 People, Light breakfast after run  
Compostables – 14 bags, Recyclables – 3+ bags / 25 cu/yd flattened  
cardboard - Trash – 3+bags

#### Brian Schatz Fundraiser – 90% diversion

250 - 300 people – Volunteers prepared food, Most beverages in cups  
Good monitoring, Lack of communication with food prep  
Compostables 16 bags of compostables – Recyclables 1 bag (primarily from the  
beer drinkers doing the food prep) + 0.5 cy cardboard – Trash 2 bags



# Zero Waste Stations and Volunteers

A Zero Waste Station can be as simple as three trash cans with signs, or a specially constructed enclosure complete with instructional signage, pictures, and in some cases even samples of the various products. If you need simple signage for your containers you can download copies off our website (see appendix) or if you have a larger event and want to borrow one of our Zero Waste Stations contact ZWK at [zerowastekauai.net](http://zerowastekauai.net) (well in advance).



Depending on the size of your event, the complexity, the makeup of the participants, your ability to control vendor food service ware, etc; you may want / need to include monitors at each station. For smaller groups, or groups that have been through this before, simple signs and announcements with someone roaming around checking on the contamination is often enough.

**Sources for Volunteers for Larger Events:** Contact ZWK for information on groups who have worked with us to help make our events successful. Many of them have assisted at numerous events and can manage the Zero Waste Stations with minimal oversight. Some community groups will request / appreciate a donation.

**Training and Oversight:** If you are using volunteers to monitor your stations, check out our volunteer instructions in the Appendix or contact us to assist you with training.

**Appreciation:** Always make sure you thank your volunteers for their efforts! Also, let their organization know how much you appreciate the job they've done.



# Vendors & Food Service Providers

One of the largest contributors of waste and an area for most waste improvement and conservation are the caterers and vendors (or food service crew) of your event.

The key is to make sure that everyone selling goods and/or providing food understand the goals that you are aiming for.

## To do this effectively:

- Educate and train vendors (as well as their employees) about **Zero Waste**
- Arrange for a Zero Waste **Kauai** member to talk to vendors a few months prior to the event
- Explain the benefits of why you are doing **Zero Waste** and why you have the **Zero Waste** plan
- Include goals/expectations for vendors that are category specific and include them in any contracts
- Restrict the use of certain items to be sold or used at your event (like styrofoam containers, aluminum foil, and single use water bottles) and offer alternative solutions (like paper plates, 5 gallon jugs of water and biodegradable cups)
- Common problem products include: Straws, Coffee Lids, Condiment Packets, Aluminum Foil, and Dixie Cups & Plates
- Food Service Providers are often volunteers and don't understand their responsibilities as far as managing the waste they generate. This requires an extra effort to insure that the person in charge of food service understands and is committed to the Zero Waste concept, and that he or she communicates the specific responsibilities to all the volunteers.

### **Additional Vendor Ideas:**

- ✓ Reduce packaging - buy in bulk instead of individual servings
- ✓ Use reusable containers such as pitchers and bowls instead of canned and bottled products, ie: washable wares
- ✓ Avoid unrecyclable products
- ✓ Use compostable containers
- ✓ Buy supplies that use recycled content
- ✓ Use nontoxic cleaners
- ✓ Organize collection of cooking oil and utilize proper waste/reuse procedures
- ✓ Offer recognition and/or awards to most 'green' vendor



# Compostable Food Service Ware

Insuring everyone is on board, especially the food service providers, is essential to your event's success. For larger events, you should provide vendors with the Vendors Instructions and a list of sources of compostables well in advance. In addition, it may be a good idea to verify their purchases before the event.

Dealing with volunteer food service providers can often be a difficult issue as they may not understand the concepts of Zero Waste, compostability, and the problems with the use of non-compostable items. In some cases it may be better to purchase the material in bulk and distribute it to the various food booths.



For plain paper goods, standard Chinette plates, bowls, partitioned trays, etc. are nearly as good as the more expensive compostables (the primary concern is the bleach and other chemicals used in their manufacture vs green products). Also paper napkins and paper towels work fine.

Some of the difficult issues that need to be addressed in advance of the event include condiment packets, straws, cup lids, and vendors who show up at the last minute with non-compostables.

We've included a list of local vendors we've worked with in the Appendix (if anyone finds some other local suppliers please contact us so we can add them to the list). For certain items you may need to order in advance, others may only be available in quantities.



# Ready, Set, Waste Not!

## Event day is finally here! How to assure things run as expected with as few issues as possible

- Greet vendors and exhibitors during setup
- Provide any necessary instructions for proper separation and disposal
- Go over your game plan with volunteers
- Optimize the number of collection stations for easier oversight
- Designate a drop-site for compostables and other material.
- Set up all receptacle stations and signage (day before if possible)
  - Food service and dining areas
  - Entrance
  - Registration areas
- **Identify each container with distinctive markings or signs and unique bags;**
  - Compost - **Green** cans / **Green** bags ;
  - Recyclable - **Blue** Cans / Clear bags ;
  - Trash - **Black** cans / **Black** bags
- Promote **Zero Waste** during the event via PA announcements
- Have proper supplies ready
  - Gloves
  - Water
  - Extra bags
  - Hats/Sunscreen
  - Enthusiasm!!
- If possible, monitor each station and include one roaming person to see if volunteers or vendors are in need
- Volunteers should be easily identifiable with T-shirts, badges, etc
- Don't forget the camera! **Photos** of your event and volunteers are great for press releases and morale.

# Post Event Evaluation

Now that you can settle down it's time figure out how well your event did. This will help gauge your success and figure out next year!

👍📄 Prompt feedback from vendors, organizers, volunteers, exhibitors, haulers

👍📄 Follow up with hauler for final weights. An alternate to this could be to keep track of amount of bags that go to each destination, though weight varies widely



## Calculate Your Diversion Rate

**% Diverted = Amount diverted / Amount diverted + Amount Disposed**

Example:

10 bags of compostables, 3 bags of recyclables, and 3 bags of trash  
13 bags / 16 bags = **81% Diversion**

Since volume is the easiest way to measure diversion, the simplest way to calculate your diversion rate is to count bags. Normally you'll be using 30 to 35 gallon bags and there are roughly 8 gallons per cubic foot. Most bags are about 2/3 full when you tie them off.

If you use a dumpster or roll-off container you can ask your hauler for their capacity and estimate how full they are. Normally dumpsters (those trash containers with hinged lids that the trucks pick up and dump in the top) are 3 cubic yards or 6 cubic yards. Roll-off containers are the long open top boxes on steel wheels that the hauler picks up with a special truck and they generally run from 20 cubic yards to 40 cubic yards. For things like cardboard, if you load it into a pick-up just measure the length, width, and height of the pile and divide by 27.

# Making Zero Waste Work (The Big Picture!)

Making your event a **Zero Waste** event can conserve resources and keep our landfill from filling up. In addition, demonstrating the benefits of recycling to your friends and neighbors is one of the best educational tools we can use.

👍📱 **Publicize rate of recycling/ success in conjunction with all the effort put forth**

👍📱 **Thank donors, vendors, sponsors, volunteers with a card, email, phone call or post event celebration**

👍📱 **Be sure the data is shared with **Zero Waste Kauai!****

**Watch our diversion rate grow!!  
With People like YOU doing Zero Waste Events we  
can get “DARN NEAR ZERO!!!”**



**Even Hawaii's  
Governor "gets"  
Zero Waste!  
How About YOU ???**

# Summary of Responsibilities

## Need to Identify WHO is doing WHAT...

- Print and distribute Handouts to event team members, volunteers, vendors, etc. Insure that all members of the “team” understand what you are trying to accomplish.
- Purchase compostable products for plates, clamshells, beverage cups, utensils, etc. or make sure all food vendor food service ware is compostable.
- Order the appropriate dumpsters / disposal bins from GID based on ZWK recommendations.
- Recruit Volunteers to man stations / empty bags / provide relief.
- Pick up and return Zero Waste Stations or County recycling containers. Cans need to be rinsed out after before returning.
- If necessary tape proper signs on trash/compost containers. Remove signs when pau.
- Set-up Waste/Recycling Stations (recycling / compostables / refuse).
- Develop vendor requirements for non-redemption recyclables and trash.
- Oversee volunteers or monitors during the event.
- Haul full bags of Compostables, Trash, and Recyclables to designated areas.
- Make regular announcements re. the Zero Waste policies over the PA system.
- Post flyers around food sale booth





# Additional Resources

## **Local Assistance:**

County of Kauai Solid Waste Division – Recycling Group: 808-241-4439 or 241-4837

Zero Waste Kaua'i – [zerowastekauai@gmail.com](mailto:zerowastekauai@gmail.com) / zerowastekauai.net

## **Appendices:**

An expanded list of Resources, Planning Worksheets, Vendor Instructions, Compostable Service Ware Providers, Potential Volunteer Groups, etc. can be found in the Appendices.

- A - Zero Waste Philosophy
- B - ZWK Services and Fees
- C - Pre-Planning Check List
- D - Volunteer Instructions
- E - Vendor Instructions
- F - Compostable Food Service Ware Sources
- G - Local Resources / Contacts
- H – Public Service Announcement
- I - Event Report Form

You can also download editable versions of any of these documents from our website – [zerowastekauai.net](http://zerowastekauai.net)