

Green Restaurant Guide: Waste Reduction

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1. Purpose Of This Guide

The purpose of this Waste Reduction Guide is to assist new and existing food establishment owners and managers with establishing and maintaining a waste reduction program. The guide provides resources and ideas on free services available and measures to take to start greening your operations and your bottom line.

If you have enrolled in the **San Francisco Green Business Program** for environmental assistance and award recognition, follow all sections of the Green Restaurant Guide to fulfill the measures on the checklist. For assistance regarding the San Francisco Green Business Program, please visit www.sfgreenbiz.org or contact 415-355-3700.

2. Why Reduce Waste?

Reducing waste makes good business sense and helps conserve the environment for future generations.

1. Reducing waste supports San Francisco's goal of 75 percent landfill diversion by 2010 and zero waste by 2020. The City and waste haulers provide financial incentives to businesses that reduce waste.
2. Disposing of materials that can be composted or recycled takes up valuable space in landfills and requires the costly development of new landfill sites. Reducing waste keeps businesses' disposal costs down and saves open space in the Bay Area.
3. Reduction and recycling saves energy and water resources. Manufacturing goods from recycled materials typically requires less energy and water than producing goods from raw materials.
4. Preserve the environmental benefits of forests. Waste reduction and recycling of paper products allows more trees to remain standing in the forest, where they can continue to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, provide habitat for animals and prevent soil erosion.
5. Organics waste in landfills contributes to global warming and local pollution. The lack of oxygen inside landfills causes decomposition that generates the greenhouse gases methane and carbon dioxide. These gases can contribute to rising global temperatures, sea level changes, and other climate effects. Food and plant waste also break down into acids under these anaerobic (oxygen-free) conditions, with potential to leach metals and other hazardous chemicals from landfill waste into soil and groundwater.
6. Composting helps produce the delicious organic food and wine for which California is famous. San Francisco sends over 300 tons of material each day to a nearby composting facility. Food scraps, plant trimmings, soiled paper and other compostables are turned into nutrient-rich soil that in turn is used to grow local food.

Progressive food service establishments in San Francisco already achieve 95 percent waste diversion from landfill and are constantly working on ways to further reduce their waste. At this point, there are only a few items/materials found in a typical restaurant that cannot be diverted and therefore have to go into the garbage:

- Latex gloves for food preparation
- Plastic wrap for sealing food items in containers to keep them fresh or from vendor deliveries
- Styrofoam packaging from new computers or deliveries of frozen items
- Broken ceramic dishes and cups

With proper purchasing and handling and careful preparation and storage, food service establishments can reduce waste and save money.

3. Four Steps to Starting Your Waste Reduction Program

Step 1: Review your garbage bill and look for your diversion rate. If your rate is below 75 percent contact your hauler and ask for a free waste audit. View a sample commercial waste bill here: http://www.sfgarbagerates.com/media/commercial_bill.pdf

BLACK CART
This is the charge for your garbage service (non recyclables).

BLUE CART
This is the charge for your recycling service.

GREEN CART
This is the charge for your compost service.

RECYCLING DISCOUNT
This is the amount credited to your bill for actively recycling.

PREMIUM SERVICES
Garbage rates are based on curbside service. Premium services are not subject to the recycling discount.

SURCHARGE
The City requires a surcharge of 1.3% to provide adequate funds for possible environmental costs related to refuse disposal. The funds are held in a separate account under the City's jurisdiction.

| DATE | DESCRIPTION OF BILLING CHARGES | AMOUNT |
|------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| 07/12/2006 | PREVIOUS BALANCE | 445.94 |
| | PAYMENT | (445.94) |
| | GARBAGE SERVICE CHARGE JUL | 275.99 |
| | RECYCLE SERVICE CHARGE JUL | 102.18 |
| | COMPOST SERVICE CHARGE JUL | 102.18 |
| | RECYCLING DISCOUNT JUL | (182.53) |
| | KEY CHARGE JUL | 51.70 |
| | DISTANCE CHARGE JUL | 48.04 |
| | ELEVATION CHARGE JUL | 120.09 |
| | SPECIAL RESERVE SURCHARGE | 3.59 |
| | RECYCLING 40% | |
| | BALANCE DUE | 521.23 |

Haulers in San Francisco:

Sunset Scavenger Company: 415-330-1300

Golden Gate Recycling & Disposal: 415-626-4000

Step 2: Ask your staff for their input on and assistance with what can be done to reduce waste. For example, staff may need customized training and setup in order to increase your company's recycling and composting rate. Involving staff in this developmental stage will encourage participation. If you have more than 10 employees, find out who of your employees would like to champion the energy conservation program. Progressive restaurants have learned that successful conservation programs need a champion – someone to inspire employees and lead the charge.

Step 3: Work with your hauler and your employees on implementing measures such as recycling and composting station setup, optimal bin sizing, signage placement, staff training and green purchasing guidelines to increase your waste diversion rate.

Step 4: Include waste reduction, recycling and composting responsibilities in company policies, employee job duties and occupational health and safety training. Develop a "green" reward system and/or make waste reduction part of your job reviewing process. When interviewing new employees make clear that supporting the company's waste reduction efforts will be part of the job evaluation process. Take up the challenge and set a Zero Waste goal for your business.

Maintenance: Monitor your solid waste bills and review your waste reduction program along with this guide every six to 12 months. Continue to identify new ways to reduce waste.

FREE Tools For Waste Reduction:

- Waste Reduction Posters & Stickers <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BizWaste/Posters>
- Urban Compost Poster http://www.sfrecycling.com/commercial/commercial_compost.php?t=b
- Recycling Poster http://www.sfrecycling.com/commercial/commercial_recycling.php?t=b
- San Francisco Green Business Program Checklist <http://www.sfgreenbiz.org>

4. Top 5 Actions Restaurants Can Take to Reduce Waste

1. Participate in San Francisco's curbside recycling and composting program. Approximately 95 percent of the waste a restaurant produces can be recycled and/or composted. For lists of what items can be recycled and composted in San Francisco, please see these printable posters:

Urban Compost Poster: http://www.sfrecycling.com/commercial/commercial_compost.php?t=b

Recycling Poster: http://www.sfrecycling.com/commercial/commercial_recycling.php?t=b

2. Use EcoFIndeRRR (<http://www.sfenvironment.org>) to find disposal solutions for hazardous waste and other recycling, reusing and disposal needs that go beyond San Francisco's curbside recycling and composting program.

3. Adopt an environmentally preferable purchasing plan. By choosing products that are reusable, compostable, made with recycled content and/or are available in bulk, you can cut the pollution and solid waste generation of your business.

4. Switch from disposable items such as napkins, utensils, placemats, cups, trays, and single-serving condiment packages to reusable items to reduce solid waste disposal costs. *Check with your Environmental Health District Food Inspector to determine whether you are currently equipped to switch from disposable to reusable customer utensils.* For take-out, implement an "ask first policy" - ask customers whether they need utensils, napkins and condiments rather than just adding them.

5. Work with your suppliers to reduce or reuse/take back packaging and thus lower disposal costs.

5. Reduce – Reuse – Recycle: More Tips For Waste Reduction

These suggestions are grouped by operational areas and divided into the categories reduce/reuse and recycle/compost.

Free / Behavioral Change = ☺

Low Cost = \$ (Costs will vary. After initial upfront costs, you may see long-term savings.)

Investment = \$\$

Green Business checklist measure = GB

Back of the House: Reduce/Reuse

- ☺ Rehydrate vegetables that have wilted by trimming off the very bottom part of the stalk and placing in warm water (100°F), like cut flowers, for 15 to 20 minutes.
- ☺ Check your produce deliveries carefully for rotten or damaged product, and return any substandard product.
- ☺ Donate unserved food to a local food program.
- ☺ Food Runners 415-929-1866 <http://www.foodrunners.org/>
- ☺ San Francisco Food Bank: 415-282-1900, <http://www.sffoodbank.org>
- ☺ Clean coolers and freezers regularly to ensure that food has not fallen behind the shelving and spoiled.
- ☺ Store raw vegetables and other perishables in reusable airtight containers to prevent unnecessary dehydration and spoilage.
- ☺ Use hourly or daily production charts to minimize over prepping and unnecessary waste.
- ☺ When prepping food, only trim off what is not needed.
- ☺ Adjust inventory levels and rotate perishable stock at every delivery to minimize waste due to spoilage.

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- ☺ Arrange your refrigerated and dry storage areas to facilitate easy product access and rotation.
- ☺ Wrap freezer products tightly using only the amount of plastic film you need; label and date them. Make sure they are used in a timely fashion, to minimize waste due to freezer burn.
- ☺ Whenever possible, prepare foods to order.
- ☺ Use vegetable and meat trimmings for soup stock.
- ☺ Store leftover hot foods from different stations in separate containers to reduce the chance of spoilage.
- ☺ Keep oven equipment calibrated to prevent overbaking.
- ☺ Keep refrigeration units in good running order to prevent unnecessary spoilage and reduce energy costs.
- ☺ Place rubber mats around bus and dish washing stations to reduce china and glass breakage.
- ☺ Create incentives for staff to reduce breakage of china and glass.
- ☺ Store unwrapped paper supplies in a safe location and handle with care to prevent the products from falling on the floor.
- ☺ Have employees use permanent-ware mugs or cups for their drinks.
- ☺ Establish a packaging take back program with your suppliers. Ask your suppliers take back shipping boxes for reuse or recycling and to keep you informed about new and existing products that are packaged in ways that reduce waste.
- ☺ Choose vendors who take back products after their shelf life is over, especially Universal Waste e.g. fluorescent lights, computers and copiers.
- ☺ Reuse your packaging material, e.g. cardboard boxes, bubble wrap, clean plastic and paper bags.
- ☺ For caterers: If your linens are delivered in plastic covering, reuse it to line plastic crates for dirty dishes.
- ☺ Donate or exchange unwanted but usable items (furniture, supplies, electronics etc.) to schools, churches, hospitals, libraries, nonprofit organizations etc.
- ☺ Enroll in a waste exchange program such as CalMAX where your unwanted items can become someone else's resource. <http://www.calmax.org>.
- \$ Use reusable hats for kitchen employees instead of disposable paper ones.
- \$ Use a laundry service that provides reusable bags for dirty and clean linen.
- \$ Use reusable metal or nylon coffee filters.

Back of the House: Recycling/Composting

- ☺ Compost waxed cardboard, food and landscape waste and food-soiled paper.
- ☺ Recycle food and beverage containers (glass, hard plastic and metal), paper and cardboard boxes. Sign up for free cooking oil pick up in San Francisco at <http://www.sfgreasecycle.org/> (no cost option). Set up a licensed rendering service for your waste yellow grease, fat, or used cooking oil (if your business is outside of San Francisco).
- ☺ Donate empty plastic pails or buckets to schools, nurseries, churches, customers, or employees. Donate old uniforms, linens and clean plastic bags to thrift shops.
- ☺ Give unneeded hangers to garment cleaners for reuse or recycling.
- ☺ Leave grass clippings on mowed turf ("grasscycling") rather than disposing of them.

Front of the House: Reduce/Reuse

- ☺ Use serving containers in sizes that meet the packaging needs of your menu items without having excess packaging material.
- ☺ Check for discarded trays and flatware before taking out dining room trash, if applicable.
- ☺ Minimize the use of unnecessary extra packaging of take-out foods. Use less packaging for eat-in foods than for food being taken out, or use none at all.

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- ☺ Offer customers a discount if they bring their own mugs, containers or bags.
- \$ Use reusable coasters (or nothing at all) instead of paper napkins when serving beverages from the bar.
- \$ Use cloth instead of paper napkins, tablecloths and paper towels (cleaning cloths).
- \$ Use reusable table linen and dinnerware.
- \$ Use reusable (laminated) menus.
- \$ Post daily specials on wipe or chalk boards.
- \$ Purchase paper products made from recycled materials.
- \$ Serve beverages from a beverage gun or dispenser, buy bar mixes in concentrate form, and buy milk in 5-gallon dispenser boxes.
- \$ Use health department-approved, refillable condiment dispensers instead of individual packets. Buy shelf-stable food supplies in bulk when sales volume and storage space allows.
- \$\$ Install air hand dryers in restrooms.

Front of the House: Compost/Recycle

- ☺ If you serve beverages in cans or bottles, place a recycling bin in the dining area for your customers' empty beverage containers.

Office: Reduce/Reuse

- ☺ Make two sided printing and copying standard practice in your business. Set copier default to duplex printing or manually feed to duplex.
- ☺ Use computer fax modems that allow faxing directly from computers without printing.
Reduce unwanted mail by the following:
 - Write to or call senders requesting removal from mailing lists.
 - Visit <http://www.stopjunkmail.org>
 - Return labels from duplicate mailings & subscriptions, requesting all but one be removed.
 - Write "refused" on first class mail and return to sender
 - Purge your own mailing lists to avoid duplication.
- ☺ Keep a stack of previously used paper near printers. Use it for drafts, scratch paper or internal memos or designate a draft tray on printers with multiple trays.
- ☺ Help minimize misprints by posting a diagram on how to load special paper like letterhead and previously used paper so it will load properly.
- ☺ Practice efficient copying – use the size reduction feature (e.g. two pages of a periodical or book can be reduced to print on one page) AND set word processing defaults for smaller fonts and margins.
- ☺ Use electronic files rather than paper ones. Draft documents can be reviewed, edited, and shared on screen.
- ☺ For shipping non-food items, use shredded scrap paper or old newspapers for packaging needs instead of purchasing Styrofoam pellets, bubble wrap or other packing materials.
- ☺ Reuse envelopes as both send and return envelopes. Cover up old addresses and postage. Affix new AND/OR use two way or 'send and return' envelopes. Your outgoing envelope gets returned for its return trip.
- ☺ Donate or exchange unwanted but usable items (furniture, supplies, electronics etc.) to schools, churches, hospitals, libraries, nonprofit organizations, etc.
Enroll in a waste exchange program such as CalMAX where your unwanted items can become someone else's resource. <http://www.calmax.org>.
- ☺ Replace memos with e-mail messages & discourage the printing of messages. Order supplies by phone or email.

- \$ Set up a bulletin board or develop routing lists for bulletins, memos, and trade journals to minimize the number of employees receiving individual copies.
- \$ When printing marketing materials or menus, try to get them printed in vegetable-based inks on recycled (preferably with 100% post-consumer content) and/or TCF (totally chlorine free) paper.
- \$ Design marketing materials that require no envelope – simply fold and mail.

Office: Compost/Recycle

- ☺ Order supplies with minimal packaging and ensure that what packaging is required is recycled and recyclable or compostable.
- ☺ Recycle all of the following fibers: corrugated cardboard boxes, mixed paper (junk mail, scrap and colored paper), newspaper, and office paper (white ledger, computer and copier paper)
- ☺ Set up appropriate green waste and composting service with your garbage company. Make composting part of the contract with your landscape service.

6. Purchasing Guidelines for Waste Reduction

Building & Remodeling Materials

- Building Materials: Recycled content or made out of renewable materials

Cleaning Products and Services

- Use a multipurpose cleaner that can be used for many types of surfaces rather than cleaners that are job specific. Use cleaning agents that are the least hazardous for your applications without compromising health standards.
- Purchase cleaning supplies in concentrate form and portion into labeled, reusable dispensing bottles. Use an enclosed dispensing system if possible.
- Choose a laundry service that provides reusable bags for dirty and clean linen.
- Use plastic trash can liners made of *recycled* HDPE instead of ones made of LDPE or LLDPE. They contain less raw material, work equally well for most uses, and generally cost less.

Food

- Buy ingredients (e.g. flour, sugar and salt) in bulk when sales volume and storage space allow.
- Consider buying shelled eggs, in bulk, if your egg usage for general cooking or baking is three or more cases per week.
- Buy meats in bulk or uncut form and cut to size.
- Buy pickles, mayonnaise, salad dressings, etc. in containers other than non-recyclable hard plastic pails or buckets. Look for plastic-lined cardboard, cry-o-vac, or foil pouches.

Bar and Dining Areas

- Serve straws in your self-service area from health department-approved dispensers rather than pre-wrapped. Offer only one straw per drink.
- When purchasing paper products (e.g. stationery, napkins etc.) try to ensure they are unbleached (Totally Chlorine Free – TCF)
- Buy reusable coasters; eliminate paper coasters.
- Replace disposable beverage containers with washable, reusable ones. ***Check with your Environmental Health District Food Inspector to determine whether you are currently equipped to switch from disposable to reusable cups.***

Napkins, Bathroom Tissue, Paper Towels

- Minimum of 35 percent (%) post consumer waste (PCW) content.
- Switch from paper napkins to reusable linen napkins.
- Unbleached or Processed Chlorine-Free (PCF).

Office Products

- Purchase binders, folders, pens & pencils made of recycled materials.
- Lease, rather than purchase, computers, printers and copiers.

- Buy rechargeable batteries.

Paper Products, Envelopes, Business Cards, Menus, Napkins

- Minimum of 35 percent post consumer waste (PCW) content
- Unbleached or Processed Chlorine-Free (PCF)

Suppliers/General

- Always consider durability as a cost criterion when buying equipment and other products.
- Buy products in returnable, reusable or recyclable containers. These must be approved for commercial use in food establishments.
- Ask suppliers to minimize packaging.
- Choose vendors who take back products after their shelf life is over (i.e. fluorescent light bulbs).

To-Go Ware

- Purchase containers made of paper or any of the following for take-out orders:
Plant Fiber: Sugar Cane (Bagasse), Rice or Bamboo
Derived Starch: Potato, Corn, Wheat and/or Potato Starch
Bio-Plastic: Poly lactic acid (PLA)
Recyclable plastic containers: Plastic tubs numbered 2,4 or 5 ONLY
- Purchase bags made from recycled paper or plastic, or 100% compostable bags.
- Buy utensils made out of compostable materials.

7. They Did It – So Can You! Case Studies

Scoma's Restaurant, San Francisco, CA

Scoma's has achieved and maintained a 95 percent diversion rate through sustainable practices. Their primary waste stream is food, which is processed into compost, sold to farmers and wine makers, whose products are then served in the restaurant; closing the loop from the sea to the earth. The 95% waste diversion rate results in a 75% reduction of waste hauling fees. Scoma's works to divert some 300 tons from the landfill, saving approximately \$24,000 annually.ⁱ

Royal Blend Coffee, Bend, OR

Royal Blend Coffee added a bulk dispenser of skim milk and stopped purchasing and wasting cartons of skim milk. The dairy supplier provided the dispenser at no charge. Each 6-gallon plastic bag of milk replaces 24 one-quart cartons. Financial savings: \$767/year. Resource savings: 812 pounds of packaging/year.ⁱⁱ

8. Waste Reduction Awards, Incentives and Resources

Waste Reduction Award

The Waste Reduction Awards Program (WRAP) is administered by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. WRAP provides an opportunity for California businesses to gain public recognition for their outstanding waste reduction efforts and lets the community know your business takes waste reduction seriously. WRAP also provides businesses with examples of successful waste reduction techniques, which they may adopt as their own. <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/wrap/>

Rebates & Incentives

Recycling & Composting

Up to 75 % Discount

Contact your San Francisco hauler for more information:

Sunset Scavenger Company: (415) 330-130

Golden Gate Recycling & Disposal: (415) 626-4000

<http://www.goldengatedisposal.com>

Food Donation

Tax Deductible

Businesses may write off food donations to recognized nonprofits on their tax forms (consult a tax advisor for details). The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act ([Public Law 104-210](#)) protects those who donate food in good faith from liability.

Reuse, Recycling and Disposal Resources

SF Environment's EcofindeRRR is a **FREE** search engine providing information on places to recycle or properly dispose of just about everything. Go to: <http://www.sfenvironment.org> or call (415) 355-3700 to find out where you can recycle or properly dispose hazardous waste or other hard to dispose items.

iReuse facilitates the reuse of unwanted products and materials.

<http://www.ireuse.com/>

More Information on Waste Reduction

San Francisco Department of the Environment's list of approved products:

http://www.sfenvironment.org/our_programs/topics.html?ssi=9&ti=22

California Integrated Waste Management Board: Resources for Business

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Business/>

Biodegradable Products Institute:

The BPI compostable label lets business owners, their employees, residents, and the composting collectors and processors know that products with this label have been tested to ensure that they will compost quickly, completely, and safely. <http://www.bpiworld.org/BPIPublic/Approved.html>

National Restaurant Association's Conserve: Solutions for Sustainability

<http://conserve.restaurant.org/>

9. FAQ

1. How do I conduct a waste audit and set-up a recycling and composting program?

A waste audit is a structured process used to quantify the amount and types of waste generated by a business. Information from audits helps identify current waste practices and how they can be improved.

You can either contact your hauler to request a waste audit or you can do one yourself.

- The first step in the audit process is to look at what materials you are currently disposing of and in what quantities. In developing your recycle and compost program, concentrate on the high volume materials (in food service it would be food waste and with offices it would be paper). Also look at high value materials such as toner cartridges and aluminum cans.
- Consider the weight and volume of the materials you currently dispose of that could be recycled. Restaurants and bars generate large quantities of glass and are often charged a surcharge for collection due to the weight. If the establishment generates a high volume of cardboard it may be cost effective to bale the material; this can also help increase the marketability of the cardboard.
- Assess your overall operation and determine where the waste is being generated and if this material can be:
 - reduced (e.g. appropriate ordering)
 - reused (e.g. reuse packing material)
 - recycled or composted (e.g. compost food waste)
- Place collection containers where the waste is generated. The easier it is to recycle or compost, the higher the participation rate will be. Clearly mark collection containers and make it difficult to

contaminate the recyclables. For example: use lids with only a hole in the top for the collection of aluminum cans. Locating the collection containers near trash cans can cut down on contamination. In addition, place signage next to the receptacles to show what is recyclable and what is compostable and hence cut down on contamination.

- The main reason for starting a recycling program is to reduce waste collection costs. After implementing your recycling program, conduct a second waste audit to see if your program has significantly reduced the amount of waste generated. If it has, you may want to adjust your collection schedule or sizes of your containers to save you money.ⁱⁱⁱ

2. I don't have space for a composting bin. What can I do?

Call your hauler for help. Adjusting your service levels and implementing proper setup and training can make a difference in your space configuration.

3. What about odors and pests?

To avoid odor, health and safety concerns, waste should be collected and composted in a timely and efficient manner. Educating staff responsible for collection and composting of food is a key component to a successful program. Food scraps must be separated, and a frequent and routine collection schedule must be adhered to. Kitchen staff and customers (if plate scrapings, or post-consumer scraps, are collected) must be taught to properly separate materials.

To minimize odors at the collection source, empty collection containers regularly and periodically rinse them with soap and hot water.

When collecting large amounts of food waste, you can minimize pest problems by keeping bins closed, using appropriate, leak-proof collection containers, regularly emptying these containers into larger onsite collection bins, and frequent collection by the hauler.^{iv}

10. Glossary

Bioplastics are a new generation of biodegradable & compostable plastics, derived from renewable raw materials such as starch (e.g. corn, potato, tapioca etc), cellulose, soy protein, lactic acid, etc. and when discarded properly decompose to carbon dioxide, water and biomass.

Various bioplastics can take different lengths of times to fully compost. They are designed to be composted in a commercial composting facility, where high temperatures can be reached and materials break down between 90-180 days. Most existing international standards require biodegradation of 60% within 180 days along with certain other criteria for the material to be called compostable.

A plastic may be considered degradable but not biodegradable or it may be biodegradable but not compostable (that is, it breaks down too slowly to be called compostable or leaves toxic residue). The following information makes the distinction among these terms.

Compostable Plastic is "capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site as part of an available program, such that the plastic is not visually distinguishable and breaks down to carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass, at a rate consistent with known compostable materials (e.g. cellulose) and leaves no toxic residue." American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM). In order for a plastic to be called compostable, these criteria must be met:

- Biodegrade - break down into carbon dioxide, water, biomass at the same rate as cellulose (paper).
- Disintegrate - the material is indistinguishable in the compost, that it is not visible and needs to be screened out
- Eco-toxicity - the biodegradation does not produce any toxic material and the compost can support plant growth.

Biodegradable Plastic is plastic which will degrade from the action of naturally occurring microorganism, such as bacteria, fungi, etc. over a period of time. Note, that there is no requirement for leaving "no toxic residue", and as well as no requirement for the time it needs to take to

biodegrade.

Degradable Plastic is plastic which will undergo a significant change in its chemical structure under specific environmental conditions resulting in a loss of some properties. Please note that there is no requirement that the plastic has to degrade from the action of "naturally occurring microorganism" or any of the other criteria required for compostable plastics.

Composting is the process of aerobic (oxygen present) decomposition of biodegradable organic matter to produce a nutrient-rich soil amendment. It is created by: combining organic wastes (e.g., yard trimmings, food wastes, manures) in proper ratios into piles, rows, or vessels; adding water and bulking agents (e.g., wood chips) as necessary to accelerate the breakdown of organic materials; and allowing the finished material to fully stabilize and mature through a curing process. The decomposition is performed primarily by bacteria and invertebrates. Composting is limited to solid materials and is not appropriate for liquids. Composting cannot occur within landfills, which lack oxygen.

Diversion Rate: For waste measurement purposes, diversion is any combination of waste prevention (source reduction), recycling, reuse and composting activities that reduces waste disposed as garbage. The diversion rate is the percentage of waste materials diverted from traditional disposal such as landfilling or incineration to be recycled, composted, or re-used. It typically represents the percentage of solid waste that is recycled and composted.

http://www.babylon.com/definition/Diversion_Rate/English

Environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP), also called green purchasing/ procurement, is the procurement of products or services that have a lesser impact on human health and the environment. Environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines specify the environmental attributes and certification requirements of a product or service. Consider the following environmentally and socially responsible attributes:

| | |
|---|--|
| Paper Products | Minimum of 35 percent (%) post consumer waste (PCW) content |
| Paper Products | Tree-free, Unbleached or Processed Chlorine-Free (PCF) |
| Food products | Certified Organic, locally grown/raised |
| Seafood | Sustainably harvested, Marine Stewardship Council certified, meets Seafood Watch standards |
| Coffee, Chocolate, Tea, Fruit Rice | Fair Trade Certified |

Hazardous Waste/ Universal Waste: A hazardous product is one that has the potential to cause harm to human health and/or the environment. Hazardous waste regulations designate a category of hazardous wastes called "Universal Waste." This category includes many common items, such as fluorescent lamps, cathode ray tubes, computers, televisions, electronics instruments that contain mercury, batteries, and cellular phones. All hazardous wastes are banned from the landfill and must be properly handled.

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WPIE/HazSub/UniWaste.htm>

Organics or organic waste is material that is or was recently living, such as produce, animals, leaves and yard trimmings.

Post-consumer wastes are items that have reached their end use and then have been placed in recycling bin and sent to a waste collection facility. At the collection facility, the items are sorted by type and sent to recycling facilities. For paper, post-consumer fiber is sent to a pulp mill to be made into post-consumer pulp. The pulp is then used in the recycled paper making process.
<http://www.newleafpaper.com>

Processed chlorine free (PCF) refers to recycled paper in which the recycled content is unbleached or bleached without chlorine or chlorine derivatives. Dioxins and other toxins and pollutants created by chlorine and its derivatives are often referred to as chlorinated organic compounds. The dioxins have been associated with adverse affects on the immune and reproductive systems of human as well as those of fish and wildlife species. <http://www.newleafpaper.com>

Zero waste is a goal based on the concepts that wasting resources is inefficient and that we should

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work to achieve efficient use of our natural resources. It requires that we maximize our existing recycling and reuse efforts, while ensuring that products are designed for the environment and have the potential to be repaired, reused, or recycled. The success of zero waste requires that we redefine the concept of "waste" in our society. In the past, waste was considered a natural by-product of our culture. Now, it is time to recognize that proper resource management, not waste management, is at the heart of reducing waste sent to landfills. <http://www.zerowaste.ca.gov/WhatIs.htm>

Credits

Thank you to Heike Bridgwater and Ivy Wong for your dedication and extensive contributions to this guide.

Information and guidelines from the San Francisco Green Business Program DIY guide and checklist were used in this guide.

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- i <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WRAP/search.asp?VW=APP&BIZID=4971&YEAR=2006&CNTY>
 - ii <http://www.oregondeq.org/lq/sw/cwrc/success/foodservice.htm>
 - iii <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/airwaste/wm/recycle/FACTS/ComRec.htm>
 - iv <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/organics/fd-faq.htm#odors>