



Low-waste event guide

Before the event

PLANNING

- ❑ **Provide bulk beverages and condiments:** Use dispensers, jugs, or large bottles/jars. Make water bottle filling stations available when possible.
- ❑ **Choose reusable cups, plates, and utensils:** Disposable items are not accepted in recycling or compost. Rent reusable cups or encourage guests to bring their own. Develop a dishwashing plan.
- ❑ **Reuse linens & decorations:** Choose materials that can be used again at future events. Use natural decorations (e.g., flowers) that can be composted.

WORKING WITH VENDORS

- ❑ **Communicate your goals:** Notify event planners and vendors of waste reduction goals and requirements as early as possible.
- ❑ **Provide recycling guides** as soon as possible.
- ❑ **Meet with vendors on-site before event:** Show everyone what's recyclable and where bins, bottle-filling stations, and waste storage will be located.
- ❑ **Enforce your standards:** Check that all materials meet your waste diversion standards in advance.

WASTE STATIONS

- ❑ **Determine quantity:** See the green box to the right.
- ❑ **Plan locations:** Determine where guests will get rid of waste, such as entrances, exits, and dining areas.
- ❑ **Put garbage and recycling bins together:** This helps prevent contamination. Tie frames together to keep them from tipping in wind.
- ❑ **Empty liquids:** Ask guests to empty beverage containers into a bucket or onto a grassy area.
- ❑ **Borrow bins:** Contact Thurston County to borrow portable recycling and garbage bins, signage, and plastic bags. These are available at no cost.
- ❑ **Label bins:** Clearly label all bins with words and images of accepted materials.
- ❑ **Collect and store materials:** Designate a storage spot for full bags and tell all event staff.
- ❑ **Properly dispose of materials:** Know where to take the collected recyclables and garbage after your event. Find options at [ThurstonSolidWaste.org](https://www.thurstoncounty.org/solidwaste)



COMMUNICATION

- ❑ **Share reminders in advance:** Include waste reduction reminders in all flyers, emails, social media, or other communications distributed before the event (e.g., "Please bring a reusable cup.").
- ❑ **Map your waste stations:** Include waste station locations on any maps of the event or venue.

VOLUNTEERS

- ❑ **Create a schedule:** Assign each volunteer to a specific waste station or group of waste stations, especially at peak times.
- ❑ **Assist at waste stations:** volunteers can guide visitors to use the correct bins and empty bins as they fill.

HOW MANY BINS DO I NEED?

In general, plan to use one set of garbage and recycling bins for every 25 guests. However, this depends on the type and quantity of materials being offered and the number of areas generating waste.

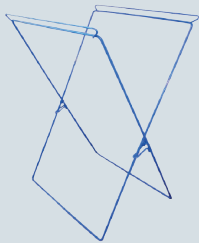
Visit [ThurstonSolidWaste.org](https://www.thurstoncounty.org/solidwaste) for free Borrow-a-Bin pickup locations throughout Thurston County.

NEED MORE BAGS?

All bin loans include several free bags. If you need more, we recommend clear bags for recyclables and black for garbage. Bags are 40" x 45".

Setting up portable bins

1 Open frame with double bar on top



Make sure that the "double bar" is on top when setting up the frame.

2 Lock the bag to the frame



Pull through

Work from the inside to outside. Using two hands, pull the top edge of the bag through the double bar approximately 6".



Push over

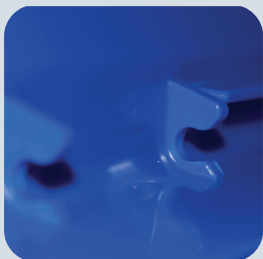
Still using two hands, push the top edge of the bag over the double bar approximately 6", catching the corners.



Tighten

Now, grasp both sides of the bag. Pull down and in to tighten around the corners. Repeat on other side.

3 Snap the lid to the frame



The lid has four hidden clips which snap securely to the frame.

You're done!

During the event

- ☐ **Prepare vendors:** Greet each vendor during set-up to explain which materials are recyclable vs. garbage. Provide clear instructions for recycling their materials, such as flattening boxes and removing bottle caps. Be sure they know the location of the nearest waste station.
- ☐ **Inform guests:** Give an overview of what materials go into each bin when your event begins. For larger events, schedule regular announcements of waste reduction resources and locations.
- ☐ **Empty bins often:** This is especially important if odors are strong and could discourage recycling. Store collected materials in a single location, away from the main event.
- ☐ **Check in with volunteers often:** Offer instruction and provide them with empty bags.

After the event

- ☐ **Thank guests, volunteers, and vendors:** They all assisted with your waste reduction efforts.
- ☐ **Track weights:** If possible, weigh the amounts of trash and recycling collected to use as a benchmark in setting goals for your next event.
- ☐ **Track waste volumes:** If materials cannot be weighed, record the number of garbage and recycling bags collected.
- ☐ **Get rid of wastes:** Dispose of garbage and drop off the recyclables according to your event plan.
- ☐ **Clean bin lids and frames:** Use a rag, sponge, or brush, and soapy water.
- ☐ **Return equipment:** Don't forget to return your borrowed event recycling materials!
- ☐ **Celebrate successes:** Share results with vendors, guests, and volunteers. Include calculated waste and recycling numbers in any reports, newsletters, or social media.

Visit ThurstonSolidWaste.org for additional waste reduction and recycling resources.

Mailing Address:

Thurston County Public Works
9605 Tilley Road S
Olympia, WA 98512

