

# REDUCING FOOD WASTE

A guide for restaurants and food service operators to help divert food and food scraps from the garbage.



## Managing Food Waste in Metro Vancouver

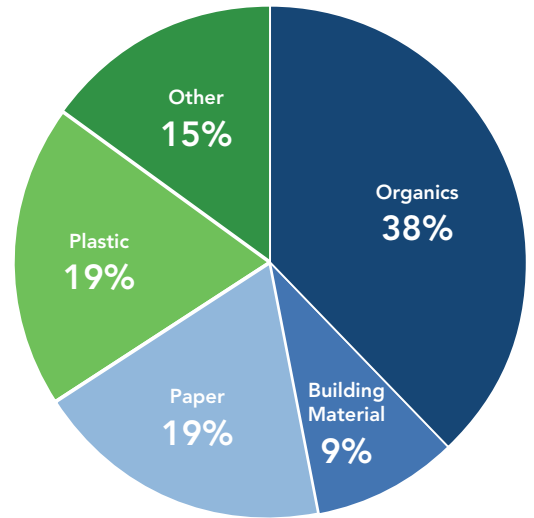
Metro Vancouver is working with you to help keep food out of the garbage, with a goal to achieve an 80% recycling rate. By separating food scraps and other organics from the garbage, about 250,000 tonnes can be kept out of landfills each year, and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG).

### Organics Disposal Ban

Since the Organics Disposal Ban came into effect in 2015, food scraps—including all raw, cooked, packaged or unpackaged foods—must be separated from regular garbage. Instead of being thrown away, food scraps and other compostable organic materials are collected in food scraps bins ('green bins') and then recycled into compost or biofuel.

### Waste by the Numbers

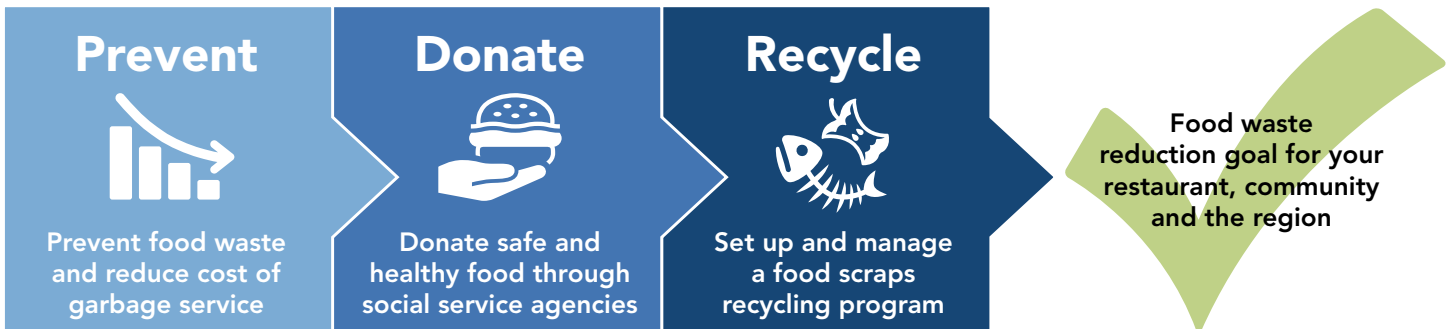
In Metro Vancouver, the largest component of the region's garbage—which includes restaurants—is organics (38%).



What's in the garbage in Metro Vancouver (2016)

## Three Ways to Reduce Restaurant Food Waste

Wasting food is costly to your business, and food scraps disposed in the garbage are a wasted resource. There are three main ways for restaurants and food service operators to reduce their food waste: prevent, donate, and recycle.



# Reducing Food Waste

The most effective way to manage food waste is to not produce it in the first place. Any unpreventable food waste should then be recycled.



Here are some tips on how to reduce food waste:

## Purchasing and Inventory

- **Keep it fresh:** Store food in the proper conditions to avoid spoilage and use older products first.
- **Use it up:** Review stock and food delivery processes for food items that have a short shelf life. Ensure you only purchase what you need, when you need it.
- **Plan it out:** Identify problem areas related to spoilage, menu prep and customer plate waste to reveal opportunities to reduce waste. Choose food products that have compostable or recyclable packaging.

## Take-out and Delivery

- **Check local policies:** Each municipality may have different local policies regarding single use items such as plastic and paper bags, disposable cups, take-out containers, straws, and utensils.
- **Choose recyclable or compostable containers:** While recyclable and compostable containers both have advantages and disadvantages, it's usually best to stick to one type within a product category (such as cups) to avoid confusing staff and customers.
- **Choose re-usable containers:** Whenever possible, a re-usable foodware program that meets health requirements is the best choice.



# Recycling Food Scraps\*

## What's In:

- ✓ All food, including bones, eggshells and sauces
- ✓ Coffee grounds, filters, and tea bags
- ✓ Wooden utensils, chopsticks and toothpicks
- ✓ Napkins, paper bags, pizza boxes
- ✓ Plain uncoated paper plates, bowls and clamshells
- ✓ Wax-coated bags or wrap paper
- ✓ Plain and food-grade wax-coated wooden cutlery

## What's Out:

- ✗ Plastic and foil condiment packages
- ✗ Plastic wrap and trays
- ✗ Polystyrene cutlery, plates and clamshells
- ✗ PLA-coated cold cups, clamshells, cutlery and straws
- ✗ Biodegradable corn or potato starch plastic
- ✗ Oxo-degradable plastic bags

\* Check with your hauler to confirm whether your chosen product is accepted as compostable in either municipal or commercial facilities.

## Avoid Contamination

A hauler can refuse to pick up a food scraps bin contaminated with non-organic products, such as plastic bags. Repeat infractions mean higher costs.

- **Eliminate or reduce contamination:** If the same contaminants often end up in the food scraps recycling bin, consider improvements (staff training, signage, location of bins) to prevent it from recurring.
- **When in doubt, place in the garbage:** Haulers prefer items go in the garbage rather than risk contaminating the food scraps recycling bin.
- **Make recycling easy:** Glass is the most dangerous contaminant in a food scraps bin, and plastic is the most common. Ensure that cleaning and sorting of recyclable items is convenient.

## Reduce Odours and Pests

- **Keep the bins clean:** Clean and rinse bins regularly. Line bin bottoms with compostable cardboard, egg cartons, or paper to soak up excess liquid.
- **Prevent odour:** Refresh bins with a dash of vinegar or sprinkle of baking soda. Use leak-proof containers with closed lids. Keep outdoor bins out of direct sunlight on warm days.
- **Avoid attracting flies:** Keep bins closed, especially those that contain meat and protein scraps. Use layers of shredded paper, napkins or other paper to cover fruit and vegetable scraps.
- **Preventing pests:** Store locked outdoor bins away from fences, trees and picnic tables to prevent pests from accessing them.

# Seven Steps to a Successful Food Scraps Recycling Program

## 1 Engage Your Staff

Everyone needs to be involved in a successful food scraps recycling program, including the owner, manager, chef, purchaser, and serving, kitchen and custodial staff.

- Ask your staff for their ideas or concerns.
- Assign responsibilities to all staff.
- Encourage feedback on challenges and solutions.



## 2 Look at Your Current Garbage

Review the amount of food scraps and compostable organics that end up in the garbage.

- Track compostable and recyclable materials in your garbage using a simple spreadsheet.
- Visually estimate compostable and recyclables in the garbage to find the causes (workload, absence, turnover) and solutions.

Date	Food Scraps	Recyclables			
		Paper	Soft Plastic	Hard Plastic	Other
May 7	50%	20%	10%	10%	10%
May 8	60%	10%	30%	none	none

## 3 Understand Your Hauling Service Contract

Work with your food scraps hauler to manage contamination, keep costs low, and maximize diversion from the garbage. Some topics to discuss include:

- The number and size of bins and pick-up frequency.
- Cost of additional pick-ups.
- Availability of bin liners, bin cleaning and/or bin replacement program to help control odours?
- Supplementary services such as signage, waste audits, or regular reporting on your diversion.
- Consolidating your waste and recycling programs with one hauling service.
- Acceptable compostable packaging and foodware.

Call the RCBC Recycling Hotline at 604-REC-YCLE (604-732-9253) for a list of waste haulers and consultants.

## 4 Assess Work Flow and Recycling Areas

Organize work areas to make space for food scraps recycling containers in the kitchen, and larger green bins in the recycling area.

- Let staff choose waste sorting containers for their work stations that suit their needs.
- Position green bins beside the garbage bins for convenient sorting.
- Adapt the bin sizes as less garbage and more food waste is produced.

## 5 Start in the Kitchen

Start your food scraps recycling program in the kitchen and then expand to the other work areas.

- Place bins in visible locations where food scraps are created and discarded.

## 6 Create Clear Signage

Use clear and simple signage to encourage food scraps recycling. The more consistent the signage, colours and images, the easier it will be for staff to use the correct bins.



- Signage that clearly illustrate both the “Yes” and “No” items are the best at helping avoid contamination.
- If the same items keep ending up in the wrong bin, discuss with staff how to make the signage more clear.

For sample signage, staff room posters, videos, and other resources, visit [www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps](http://www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps).

## 7 Train, Monitor and Provide Feedback to Staff

Ensure that food waste reduction is integrated in your staff training program.

- Make food waste reduction part of staff training.
- Discuss food scraps recycling issues and brainstorm solutions at weekly meetings.
- Talk about the program successes, such as tonnes of food waste prevented, to encourage them to contribute.



# Donating Safe and Healthy Foods

## Considering a Food Donation Program

- **Five reasons to have a food donation program:**
  - Community engagement
  - Reduce environmental impact
  - Improve corporate social responsibility
  - Attract dedicated staff
  - Maximize financial benefits



- **The “good samaritan” act:** BC has adopted the *Food Donor Encouragement Act* which protects donors from liability when they donate surplus food.
- **Three steps to starting a food donation program:**
  - Determine if food is appropriate for donation
  - Choose where to donate your food
  - Record and track food donations

For more information on food donation, search “BCCDC Food Donation Guidelines” on your internet browser.

# Front-of-House

## Customer Awareness

- **Design a front-of-house system:** Bins and signage that clearly show your customers what to do will encourage them to sort their waste and recyclables properly.
- **Serve food, not waste:** Use condiments in bulk rather than individual-size packets.



## Need More Information?

### Additional Resources

**Full Guide** – This is a shortened version of a more detailed guide, *Closing the Loop with Organics Recycling*, available by visiting us online at [www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org) and searching “Closing the Loop.”

**Signage** – For sample signage, staff room posters, videos, and other resources, visit [www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps](http://www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps).

**Haulers** – For questions about food scraps recycling or to find contacts for service providers, call the RCBC Recycling Hotline at 604-732-9253 or visit [www.rcbc.ca](http://www.rcbc.ca).

**Food storage** – For information on shelf life, best before dates, and fridge and freezer guides, visit [www.lovefoodhatewaste.ca](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.ca).

**Food Donation** – For more information on food donation, search “BCCDC Food Donation Guidelines.”

### Contacting Metro Vancouver

**Metro Vancouver Information Centre:** 604-432-6200 (Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm)

**Email:** [icentre@metrovancouver.org](mailto:icentre@metrovancouver.org)

(Please include “Recycling Food Scraps” in the subject line)

**Website:** [www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps](http://www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps)