



Reducing Wasted Food and Packaging: Strategy Checklist

This checklist identifies common strategies that can be used by food service establishments to reduce their wasted food and packaging. Some strategies are applicable for all types of food service establishments and others are specific to certain venue types. Choose strategies based on the opportunities that exist at your facility. Tracking food waste is always the first step.

All Food Service Venues

- Conduct a wasted food and packaging assessment using the U.S. EPA's Food and Packaging Waste Prevention Tool or another waste tracking tool
- Adjust food purchasing policies to reduce excess food purchasing
- Use just-in-time purchasing software to reduce unnecessary purchasing
- Adjust menus to reduce frequently uneaten or wasted items
- Train staff to reduce prep waste and improper cooking (for example, refine knife skills to have more efficient food preparation)
- Modify food preparation methods to minimize waste (for example, heat soups or prepare food in smaller portions)
- Store food properly to reduce spoilage
- Use reusable service ware instead of disposable service ware
- Purchase items in bulk to reduce packaging
- Donate excess food

Buffet

- Identify which buffet items are regularly wasted and reduce the quantity of those items prepared
- Implement tray-less system
- Reduce serving utensil size

Made-to-Order

- Repurpose leftover kitchen food following food safety guidelines (for example, reuse day-old bread for croutons or leftover vegetables as a pizza topping)

Grab-and-Go

- Identify which grab-and-go items are not regularly being purchased and reduce the quantity of those items prepared
- Reduce item packaging
- Use packaging that is compostable or recyclable

Menu-Driven

- Identify which menu items are being wasted on a regular basis and reduce the quantity or portions of those items prepared
- Repurpose leftover kitchen food following food safety guidelines (for example, reuse day-old bread for croutons or leftover vegetables as a pizza topping)

Quick Service

- Use recyclable or compostable packaging