



This is a guide to help you set up a successful Zero Waste event in San Francisco. You will find an overview of San Francisco laws that apply to events, as well as resources and contacts to help you plan your event.

## Local laws that apply to events:

### Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance, No. 100-09

- Requires separation of recyclables, compostables, and landfill-bound trash.
- Events must provide appropriate, color-coded, labeled bins placed in convenient locations.

### Special Event Ordinance, No. 73- 89

- Requires all street closures to have a recycling and composting plan.
- The San Francisco Department of the Environment monitors events that fall under this ordinance.

### Food Service Waste Reduction Ordinance, No. 295-06

- Prohibits the distribution, use, and sale of disposable polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) food service ware.
- Food vendors must provide either recyclable or compostable (BPI Certified) to-go containers.
- Visit: [SFEEnvironment.org/sites/default/files/fliers/files/sfe\\_zw\\_foodware\\_purchasing\\_guide.pdf](https://www.sfeenvironment.org/sites/default/files/fliers/files/sfe_zw_foodware_purchasing_guide.pdf)

### Bottled and Package Free Water Ordinance, No. 009-17

- Prohibits the sale or distribution of bottled and packaged water having a capacity of 1 liter or less on city property and at events on city property.
- Foot races and other participant sporting events are exempt.

### Single Use Plastic, Litter and Toxics Reduction Ordinance, No. 298-18

- Restricts the distribution of plastic straws, stirrers, toothpicks, and coffee lid plugs.
- Requires food and beverage accessories like lids, cutlery, and napkins to be provided upon customer request OR at a self-serve station.
- Requires event producers to promote or provide at least 10% reusable beverage containers at events of more than 100 attendees held on City property.





## Event services, zero waste (bin) stations and event greening

### 1. Submit event application (30 days prior to event)

- Submit Proof of recycling, compost, and trash collection services OR the letter from a SF Environment-registered Event Greener to permitting agency.
- See Appendix No.1 for the Outdoor Permitting Guide.

### 2. Order appropriate trash, recycling and compost service

- At least 30 days prior to the event, order recycling, composting, and trash collection services, which can include debris boxes, event boxes or bins
- Request event signage for your bins from Recology.
- Order debris boxes that have locks to avoid contamination or dumping.
- See Appendix No.2 for Recology Services.

### 3. Make a Zero Waste plan

- Map out where zero waste stations and debris boxes will be located.
- Plan to purchase your event inventory around waste prevention (tip: this will lower disposal fees).
- Determine how materials will be monitored and sorted after the event.
- Schedule pickups ahead of time for leftover food, and other donations.
- Determine how materials will be transported from zero waste stations to debris boxes.
- Hire an event greener to perform zero waste duties.
- See Appendix No.3 for Resource List.

### 4. Setting up zero waste (bin) stations

- Stations should be clearly marked and visible above a crowd.
- Ensure bins are properly labeled. Request signage from Recology or visit: [SFEnvironment.org/signmaker](https://SFEnvironment.org/signmaker).
- Recycling, composting, and trash bins should always be grouped together with clear and identifiable signage. There should be no stand-alone bins.
- Composting bins should be lined with compostable bags, not plastic bags.
- Recycling bins can be lined with clear plastic bags or no liners at all. These plastic liners must be emptied and either reused or disposed of in landfill bin (they cannot be discarded in the recycling bin).

### Hire a SF Environment registered event greener

- Event greeners provide composting and recycling services for events.
- Services may include bin monitoring, transferring material from zero waste stations to debris boxes, back-of-the-house sorting, and post event clean-up.
- See Appendix No.3 for Resource List.





## Foodware and hydration stations

### 5. Foodware

- Plastic stirrers, toothpicks and beverage plugs are banned. Acceptable alternatives include paper, wood, and other natural fiber.
- All food and beverage accessories like lids, cutlery, and napkins are to be provided upon request OR at a self-serve station.
- Distribution of single-use plastic straws including, compostable plastic ones are restricted. Acceptable alternatives include paper and other natural fiber.
- All straws may only be made available upon request i.e. behind the counter.
- Foodware provided must be reusable, recyclable, or compostable.
- Compostable foodware must be labeled with the word, "Compostable" and be BPI Certified.
- Visit [bpiworld.org/CertifiedCompostable](http://bpiworld.org/CertifiedCompostable)

### 6. Hydration Stations

- Hydration stations serve as an alternative for bottled and packaged water
- Find out how to access water for your event: [sfwater.org/eventwater](http://sfwater.org/eventwater).
- See Appendix No. 3 for Resource List.

### 7. Working with food vendors

- Include zero waste requirements into vendors contracts.
- Educate vendors/janitorial staff/volunteers on events zero waste requirements and procedures.

## Reusables

### 8. 10% Cup Requirement

- Provide, lend, or sell reusable beverage cups to event attendees.
- Promote or incentivize attendees to bring their own reusable beverage cup.
- See Appendix No.3 for Resource List.

## After the event

- Save money on disposal costs by sorting discarded materials correctly before placing them in debris boxes.
- Vendors and clean-up crew must flatten and stack cardboard boxes and put them in blue recycling debris boxes.
- We recommend that you penalize vendors for unclean booths or recycling, composting, and trash contamination.
- Debris boxes should be clearly labeled "Recycle", "Compost", or "Landfill" and locked after event is finished.





## Appendix

**1. The SF Outdoor Event Planning and Permitting Guide** assists event organizers with navigating the rules, permit processes, and agencies that affect outdoor events, and shares best practices to help them achieve successful outcome. Visit: [sf.gov.org/entertainment/sf-outdoor-event-planning-and-permitting-guide](https://sf.gov.org/entertainment/sf-outdoor-event-planning-and-permitting-guide)

**2. Recology Event Services and Bin Rentals** Call (415) 330-8422 or email [sfevents@recology.com](mailto:sfevents@recology.com)  
Visit: [Recology.com/recology-san-francisco/special-events-services/](https://Recology.com/recology-san-francisco/special-events-services/)

### 3. Resource List

	Event Greening	Hydration Stations	Reusable Cup Rental	Food Donation	Promo Cups Purchase		
Green Mary	X	X		X		(707) 548-7582	<a href="https://greenmary.com">greenmary.com</a>
Sudbusters & Wastebusters	X	X	X			(415) 929-1866	<a href="https://wastebusters.info">wastebusters.info</a>
San Francisco Conservation Corps	X					(415) 928-7322 Ext 1016	<a href="https://sfcc.org">sfcc.org</a>
Food Runners				X		(415) 929-1866	<a href="https://foodrunners.org">foodrunners.org</a>
SF Clean City Coalition	X					(415) 552-9201 Ext 11	<a href="https://sfcleancity.com">sfcleancity.com</a>
Clean Vibes	X					(707) 563-9232	<a href="https://cleanvibes.com">cleanvibes.com</a>
Race to Zero Waste	X					(415) 377-8931	<a href="https://racetozerozero.org">racetozerozero.org</a>
Aero Pure		X				(209) 333-9200	<a href="https://aeropurewater.com">aeropurewater.com</a>
Event Water Solutions		X				(705) 323-3996	<a href="https://eventwatersolutions.com">eventwatersolutions.com</a>
FloWaste		X				(415) 240-5964	<a href="https://myflowater.com">myflowater.com</a>
TriCal Rentals		X				(415) 633-6827	<a href="https://tricalifornia.com">tricalifornia.com</a>
US Pure Water		X				(510) 473-2087	<a href="https://uspw.net">uspw.net</a>
Water Monster		X				(512) 563-1737	<a href="https://thewatermonster.com">thewatermonster.com</a>
Bright Event Rentals			X			(415) 570-0470	<a href="https://bright.com">bright.com</a>
Steelys Drinkware				X		(415) 558-8839	<a href="https://steelysdrinkware.com">steelysdrinkware.com</a>
GO Box (Rental)			X			(415) 637-2339	<a href="https://goboxsfbay.com">goboxsfbay.com</a>
Event Magic (Rental)			X			(510) 434-0406	<a href="https://eventmagic.com">eventmagic.com</a>
Vessel			X			(303) 915-3079	<a href="https://vesselworks.org">vesselworks.org</a>
Muuse			X			(512) 751-0112	<a href="https://muuse.io">muuse.io</a>

