

City of Burlington Zero Waste Guide

March 19, 2024

Table of Contents

Background 3

Scope 3

Procurement..... 4

Food Service 4

Know Where to Throw..... 5

 Recycling (Blue)..... 6

 Garbage (Black)..... 6

 Composting/Organics (Green) 7

 Hazardous Waste 7

 Miscellaneous/Other 8

Appendix: Zero Waste Policy 9

 Policy Statement:..... 9

 Scope: 9

 Objectives:..... 10

 Definitions:..... 10

 Principles: 11

 References: 11

 Corporate: 11

 Provincial: 11

 Roles: 11

 Accountable: 11

 Responsible: 11

Background

In 2009, City Council approved a waste reduction strategy¹ with the following two goals:

- Waste is minimized through prevention where resources are managed efficiently by using fewer disposable items and maximizing reuse of materials; and
- Waste is properly diverted through programs such as recycling and composting.

The corporate waste strategy involved activities such as:

- Adopting a Zero Waste Policy for Food Services and Internal Staff Events;
- Removing individual waste containers in City Hall offices or workstations and installing centralized stations with two or three waste streams;
- Expanding the program to satellite facilities;
- Creating 'Know Where to Throw' signage to help staff and facility patrons know which stream to select to dispose of waste;
- Adding bottle refilling stations; and
- Eliminating the sale of bottled water in most City facilities supported with a 'Thirsty? Try the Tap' awareness campaign.

In 2024, the Zero Waste Policy (Appendix A) was updated and approved by City Council to expand the original policy to apply to all services/operations on City property (indoor and outdoor). The actions of all staff and patrons are critical to meeting the objectives of this policy.

Scope

The Zero Waste Policy applies to:

- Waste management operations in City facilities and parks;
- Corporate food services; and
- Public and private meetings and events organized by staff or an external/third party on City property, including catered events.

The Zero Waste Policy does not apply to:

- Joint Ventures though they will be encouraged to adopt zero waste practices in their operations.
- Hazardous waste. A reminder that hazardous waste should not be mixed in with the regular waste stream, as this may pose a hazard to the environment and workers. For confirmation, check out the [Put Waste in its Place](https://www.halton.ca/waste) online tool at [halton.ca/waste](https://www.halton.ca/waste)

¹ A temporary staff position was created to implement the strategy for a two-year period, but the position was not extended.

Procurement

Procurement decisions can have a real impact on the quantity of waste generated. The following provides high level guidance to assist with sustainable procurement decision making. However, staff should also refer to the City's [Procurement By-law](#), Green Procurement Guidelines and [Green Procurement Policy](#) for further assistance to consider issues such as lifecycle costs, greenwashing² and other related matters.

- Determine if the product is necessary – can it be borrowed temporarily from another service area?
- Avoid over-packaged products - is packaging reusable?
- Purchase refillable or reusable products such as printer or toner cartridges.
- Acquire or lease equipment that has waste reduction features such as photocopiers.
- Select durable items where relevant, not one-time disposable items.
- Purchase equipment that can easily be mended or has interchangeable parts.
- Procure items made with post-consumer recycled materials.
- Check stationery supplier catalogues for recycled items.
- Consider using cost savings from waste reduction activities to pay for activities that may cost a little more until economies of scale come in to play.
- Procure in partnership with others - bulk purchasing may reduce costs and often results in more negotiating power with the supplier such as metal disposal, light bulb disposal, etc.

Food Service

The following actions apply to corporate food services, internal staff organized meetings and events, and third party organized/catered events on City property:

- All shipping containers must be reusable, recyclable, or returnable where possible. Reusable shipping containers, especially for frequent deliveries, are preferred.
- Coffee and tea will be purchased in reusable, recyclable or compostable containers/packaging.
- Condiments such as sugar, milk, cream, mustard, ketchup, and jam in single serve non-recyclable packets are **prohibited**.
- Spoons or wooden stir sticks for hot drinks will be used (compostable).
- Expanded polystyrene foam products (Styrofoam) for food or beverages are **prohibited**. Reusable china dinnerware and stainless-steel dinnerware is preferred. If single use paper-based dinnerware, plates and bowls are offered, they must be recyclable and/or compostable.

² Stating something is environmentally friendly when it's not or minimizing the environmental impact.

- Paper products such as coffee cups and plates shall contain post-consumer fibre and be recyclable or compostable. Unbleached 100 percent recycled compostable napkins are preferred.
- Napkin dispensers are preferred over piles of loose napkins.
- Bottled water is **prohibited** for sale in City facilities with some exceptions³ and will not be available for
 - staff events and internal meetings
 - public meetings
 - special events organized by staff, and
 - indoor special events organized by third parties (with the exception of larger events).
- Drinking water in pitchers will be provided where possible. Glass cups should be used. If glass is not available, paper cups should be the second choice before plastic. Individuals/participants should be encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles.
- Using cellophane to wrap prepared food is to be avoided. Alternatives include domed serving trays, wax paper, or butcher paper.
- Compostable plastics are prohibited as they are not permitted in Halton Region's Green Cart or Blue Box programs.
- Zero waste, recycling and composting instructions will be visible in the food preparation and service areas.
- Recycling and composting containers will be placed in visible locations with appropriate signage and bags (clear bags for recycling and certified compostable bags for composting).
- Surplus food will be donated to local shelters and food banks where possible.

All food service items that are deemed to be recyclable and/or compostable **MUST** be accepted in Halton Region's Blue Box and/or Green Cart programs. Check their [Put Waste in its Place](#) online tool to confirm (halton.ca/waste). If the facility is serviced by another waste management company, check their requirements for what is deemed recyclable and compostable for each waste stream.

Know Where to Throw

The following is a guide for acceptable materials in each waste stream (garbage, recycling, composting, hazardous waste and other). Note that recycling programs can change and can vary by service provider. Staff should check with the waste management provider from time to time to confirm waste streams for items.

³ Exemptions include the Beachway food concession, Tyandaga Municipal Golf Course, outdoor events organized by third parties and large indoor events with more than 1,000 participants. Bottled water may be onsite at City events and day camp programs ONLY for emergency purposes and will not be used at any other time. Flavoured water is allowed.

Halton Waste Management is the provider at most City facilities, but private companies do service some buildings such as Sims Square. If the site is serviced by Halton Waste Management, please check out their [Put Waste in its Place online tool](https://www.halton.ca/waste) at [halton.ca/waste](https://www.halton.ca/waste) when in doubt as to where the waste should be placed.

Recycling (Blue)

Items listed below should be placed in the containers marked for recycling.

- Aluminum foil, pie plates and baking containers
- Black and clear plastic take-out containers
- Books (hard and soft cover) and duo tongs
- Boxed beverage containers (juice and soup boxes, gable top containers such as milk and juice cartons; straws and caps go in the garbage)
- Plastic cups and bottles (water, pop, juice, dish detergent, bleach, laundry detergent and shampoo bottles; flatten 15 L water jugs; caps go in the garbage)
- Glass bottles and jars (clear or coloured food and beverage glass containers)
- Cardboard (cereal, detergent, tissue boxes). Flatten and place in recycling bin if it fits. Large, oversized cardboard can be placed in designated cardboard bins located outside of facilities.
- Plastic tubs and lids (cottage cheese, cream cheese, dips, ice cream, margarine, and yogurt tubs; rinse if possible)
- Metal food (cans) and beverage containers
- Non-confidential wastepaper (computer paper, writing paper, envelopes, newspapers, flyers, paper bags, magazines)
- Notebooks, journals, etc. (remove all plastic or metal bindings)
- Plastic grocery, bread, milk and produce bags, plastic overwrap

Garbage (Black)

Items listed below should be placed in the containers marked for garbage.

- Bandages
- Blister packs (gum, lozenges, medicine)
- Binders (try to reuse or donate gently used items)
- Candy wrappers
- Cleaning wipes
- Coffee pods
- Compostable plastics, such as compostable cups, straws, cutlery, coffee pods, etc. The material doesn't break down in the current composting process.
- Elastics
- Face mask and shield
- Juice drink pouch
- Padded envelopes, bubble wrap
- Pen, pencils, markers
- Plastic cutlery, stir sticks, and straws

- Plastic dividers for binders
- Plastic soil bags
- Stationary organizer trays/baskets (Pen/business card holders)
- Styrofoam
- Tape
- Compact disks (CDs), music records, audio and video tapes (VHS) and cases

Composting/Organics (Green)

Items listed below should be placed in the containers marked for composting/organics. Not all City facilities have composting/organics collection. For those buildings that do not have composting/organics collection, all items listed below must be placed in the container marked for garbage.

- Bread, toast, cereal, baked goods, and pizza
- Cake, cookies, pie, muffins, and candies
- Coffee grounds and filters (no coffee pods whether compostable or not), teabags
- Dairy products, cheese, and yogurt (no containers)
- Eggs and eggshells
- Fruit
- Meat, fish, and shellfish (including bones)
- Nuts and shells
- Pasta, couscous, potatoes, rice, oatmeal, flour, and grains
- Vegetables, corn cobs and husks, and salads
- Sauces, salad dressing, syrups, peanut butter, jams, and jellies (no containers)
- Fats and oils, lard, gravy, butter, and margarine (no containers)
- Shredded paper
- Soiled paper towels, paper napkins, facial tissues, paper towel and toilet paper rolls
- Soiled paper food packaging, cardboard egg cartons, pizza liners, paper plates, paper take-out food containers including paper beverage cups (place plastic lids in the recycling bin).
- Popsicle sticks, wooden stir sticks and toothpicks

Hazardous Waste

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act defines hazardous waste and hazardous recyclable materials as those with properties such as flammability, corrosiveness, or inherent toxicity. These wastes and materials can pose a variety of risks, from skin damage on contact to the contamination of ground water, surface water, and soil as a result of leaching into the environment.

Hazardous waste that is disposed of in regular waste streams in error or out of convenience (i.e., waste or recycling), poses risk to the environment and is **prohibited**. In addition, storing hazardous waste products for extended periods of time may also

increase health and safety risks in our workplaces, including spills, fires and unintended mixing of incompatible materials.

Some common types of hazardous waste in the City of Burlington's operations are:

- Used refrigeration compressor oil;
- Expired pool chemicals (i.e., calcium hypochlorite pool shock);
- Paints (liquid and aerosol);
- Engine oils, brake cleaners, lubricants and other related fluids;
- Expired janitorial supplies (i.e., hand sanitizers, concentrate disinfectants);
- Expired liquid chemicals like glycols, brine, and biocides; and
- Biohazardous waste.

Check out the [Put Waste in its Place online tool](#) at halton.ca/waste to confirm if waste is hazardous and should be taken to the Halton Household Hazardous Waste facility. If yes, consult with the City's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Hazardous Waste Disposal. If a determination cannot be made using this tool, see Section 13 – Disposal Considerations, of the product's Safety Data Sheet or contact a member of the Health, Safety and Wellness Team.

There are currently two hazardous waste sites (generating sites) at Mainway Recreation Centre and the Roads, Parks and Forestry Operations Centre. It is **prohibited** to drop off materials without approval or prearrangement. Please refer to the SOP for Hazardous Waste Disposal for more information.

The SOP does **not** apply where an existing contract is in place at a location for a specific type of hazardous waste; if the waste is not generated by City of Burlington facilities or operations; and does not apply to asbestos containing waste (contact Health, Safety and Wellness for more information).

Miscellaneous/Other

- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (e-waste) – check with Burlington Digital Services for how to properly dispose of or recycle electronics.
- Toner cartridges - Send to the Digital Copy Centre for recycling.
- Wood/shipping skids - Contact Fire Training Hall staff at Fire Headquarters directly to make arrangements for drop off.
- Metal - Take to Roads, Parks and Forestry and placed at designated waste collection point.

Appendix: Zero Waste Policy

Approved by Council on: Dec.14, 2009

Report Number: CSI-12-09

Effective: 12/14/09

Reviewed: 2024

Amended by Council on: Apr. 16, 2024

Next Review: 2029

The Zero Waste Policy provides guidance on waste reduction and diversion activities indoors and outdoors on City property such as City Hall, arenas, community centres, parks, etc. Although achieving zero waste is an ambitious goal, it is one that we can all aspire to over time.

Policy Statement:

The Zero Waste policy affirms the City of Burlington's commitment to:

- Continuous improvement to ensure operations, programs and events on City property occur in a safe and sustainable manner, minimizing waste and ensuring proper recycling and composting (where feasible and available) to reduce our ecological footprint and reduce costs.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- Waste management operations in City facilities and parks.
- Corporate food services.
- Public and private meetings and events organized by staff or an external/third party on City property, including catered events.

This policy does not apply to:

- Joint Ventures though they will be encouraged to adopt zero waste practices in their operations.
- Hazardous waste. A reminder that hazardous waste should not be mixed in with the regular waste stream, as this may pose a hazard to the environment and workers. For confirmation, check out the [Put Waste in its Place](#) online tool at halton.ca/waste

Objectives:

Procurement:

- To reduce waste, staff should consider issues such as life cycle costs, recycled content, greenwashing, and other related matters.
- Staff should refer to the City’s [Procurement By-law](#), Green Procurement Guidelines and [Green Procurement Policy](#) for further assistance.

Food Service

- Avoid single serve and non-compostable items where possible.
- The provision of and/or sale of bottled water is restricted with some exemptions.⁴
- Zero waste, recycling and composting instructions will be visible in the food preparation and service areas.
- All food service items that are deemed to be recyclable and/or compostable MUST be accepted in Halton Region’s recycling and/or composting program. Check the [Put Waste in its Place](#) online tool to confirm (halton.ca/waste). If the facility is serviced by another waste management company, check their requirements for what is deemed recyclable and compostable for each waste stream.

A Zero Waste Guide is available for staff which provides further guidance on waste reduction measures and the City’s bottled water restrictions.

Definitions:

For this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
Ecological footprint	Calculates our impact on our environment: how much we use in relation to the environment’s capacity to provide and support our needs.
Greenwashing	Stating something is environmentally friendly when it’s not or minimizing the environmental impact.
Wishcycling	Putting items in the recycling or composting bin hoping they can be recycled or composted (when they actually can’t).

⁴ Exemptions include the Beachway food concession, Tyandaga Municipal Golf Course, outdoor events organized by third parties and large indoor events with more than 1,000 participants. Bottled water may be onsite at City events and day camp programs ONLY for emergency purposes and will not be used at any other time.

Principles:

The following principles provide guidance to the City's waste management actions:

1. **RETHINK** – Do you need to purchase the product? Is this a one-time need or ongoing use? Can it be borrowed from another department, leased, etc.? Do better options exist?
2. **REDUCE** – It is best to reduce waste at the source. Can the process, equipment, and/or material be redesigned to reduce waste? Is the product overpackaged? Can the packaging be returned for reuse?
3. **REUSE** – Is the product durable? Can it be reused (versus one-time use or disposable items)?
4. **RECYCLE** – Don't be a victim of greenwashing or fall for wishcycling. Do your homework to ensure the product is truly recyclable or compostable, that is, accepted into local recycling or composting programs or taken back by the producer for recycling.

References:

Corporate:

- Corporate Energy and Emissions Management Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Corporate Energy and Sustainable Building Policy
- Climate Lens Policy
- Procurement By-law, Green Procurement Guideline, Green Procurement Policy
- Green Fleet Strategy
- Hazardous Waste Disposal Standard Operating Procedure
- Zero Waste Standard Operating Guideline

Provincial:

- Environmental Protection Act
- Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority

Roles:

Accountable:

Executive Director, Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services is answerable for the timely review, updating and dissemination of this policy.

Responsible:

All staff and patrons are responsible for following this policy and adhering to the waste management principles noted above. Each department is responsible for implementing proper waste management measures and operations within their

activities, facilities and/or parks, and ensuring that the requirements of relevant legislation are met. The Manager of Environmental Sustainability will be responsible for the review and update of this policy as appropriate.