

Managing Zero Waste at Your Business

Best Practices for Recycling and Composting Success

Almost 70% of what Palo Alto throws away could be recycled or composted. To capture these valuable resources and meet state mandated requirements, Palo Alto requires businesses to correctly sort waste into the proper containers. Here's a step-by-step guide, with tips from Palo Alto businesses, to help your business implement and easily manage a successful zero waste program.

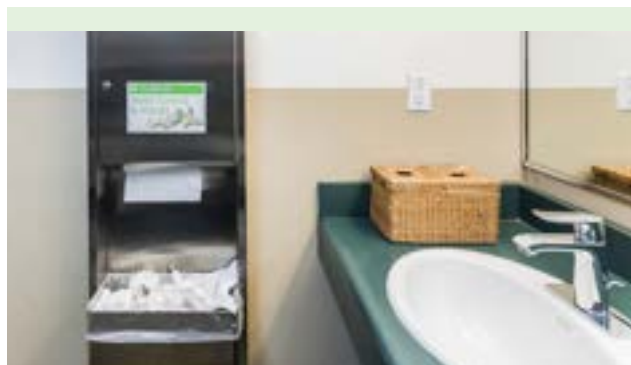
Set Up Color-Coded Sort Stations



Make it easy to sort correctly: set up color-coded, labeled, 3-bin sort stations (recycle, compost, landfill) in convenient locations.

"We strategically placed 3-bin stations throughout the office, so team members can discard their recycle, compost, and landfill items. This also gets them to move a bit during a long day at the computer."

— Mike Duong, HR Coordinator, Live Action

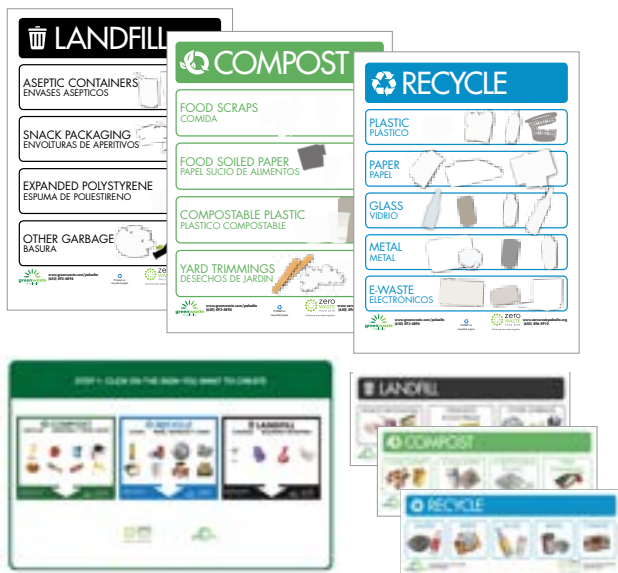


Bathrooms should have compost bins for paper towels with small landfill bins for trash.

"As a faith community we want to be good stewards. Most of what's discarded in the bathrooms are used paper towels, so we made compost the main collection bin in our bathroom."

— Ellen Bob, Executive Director, Congregation Etz Chayim

Label Sort Stations with Clear Signage



Be sure to have clear, color-coded signage at your waste stations so it's easy to double-check what goes where, right before discarding items.

For posters, service and material guides, videos and other helpful tools such as an online custom sign making tool, visit our What Goes Where Tools page at www.cityofpaloalto.org/wgwtools. You may also request signs and labels from GreenWaste of Palo Alto. See Resources section for more information.

Prep & Sort Materials Correctly



Enforcement will be based on contamination, which happens when items are not placed in the right containers. To understand what goes where, visit our What Goes Where Tools page at www.cityofpaloalto.org/wgwtools

No food or liquids are allowed in the blue bin.
Empty all bottles, cans, and containers.

Clear bag liners and 3-compartment custodial carts help make it easier for custodial staff to sort properly.

"Using clear bags and a 3-section collection cart help make sorting into outside bins easier. Our staff see quickly if it's recycling, compost or trash, and also notice and pick out wrong items. It's made a big difference."

— Alfred Marku, VP of Operations, Dinah's Hotel

Train Employees Regularly



Train and educate staff and custodians on how to properly sort their waste to ensure requirements are met. Integrate into regular training and provide frequent reminders using signage/posters as visual aids. Be sure all training materials are in languages that employees speak and read.

"During busy times, we have to make quick work of clearing tables and sorting right. That's why we do regular trainings and give frequent reminders."

— Darien Brilllott, Manager, The Tap Room

Resources

Technical Assistance: For technical assistance including site visits, help implementing Zero Waste best practices, educational materials (e.g., signage, labels, sample articles and emails, presentations) and on-site trainings, contact GreenWaste of Palo Alto at (650) 493-4894 or pacustomerservice@greenwaste.com

Zero Waste Facilitators: Zero Waste Facilitators can aid in back-of-house material sorting, helping to reduce contamination while providing valuable feedback. They may also enable customers to lower refuse costs, prevent contamination charges, and be in compliance with the City's Recycling and Composting Ordinance. These Zero Waste Facilitators operate in Palo Alto: www.cityofpaloalto.org/zwfacilitators

For more tips and best practices:

www.cityofpaloalto.org/rc-ordinance

zerowaste@cityofpaloalto.org

(650) 496-5910