



# Event Recycling Guide

## A How-To Resource for Diverting Waste Generated at Events

Almost any special event, whether a small gathering or a large festival, will produce waste. Charleston County Environmental Management (CCEM) has designed a program to effectively implement recycling at these events in order to divert waste away from the landfill.

Charleston County staff is available to conduct an on-site assessment to make recommendations and assist with planning for recycling collection. Every event is different. Use these tips as an outline to begin building a successful recycling program for your event.

The County will loan bins to community groups, nonprofit organizations, businesses and citizens who plan to collect recyclables and/or food waste generated at events held within Charleston County. The special event recycling program provides equipment for on-site collection of materials. In most cases, event organizers are responsible for hauling collected recyclables to a Charleston County [recycling dropsite](#). Larger events may qualify for a collection service by Charleston County.



*ClearStream® bins are available for collection of recyclables generated at events.*

If food is being served at your event, consider composting in an effort to send even less material to our landfill. Check out the composting sections at the end of this guide for more details.

Beginning with pre-event planning, to day-of-event tips, and post-event evaluation, special event organizers can host an environmentally friendly and sustainable event. Use Charleston County's [Special Event Recycling Checklist](#) to help manage the collection of waste at your event.

This guide is intended to help event organizers plan for the collection of recyclable materials.



*Charleston County's recycling mascot, Phil D. Bin, at the County's Annual Earth Day Festival.*

### Cost

There is no charge for an on-site assessment, technical support, or to use the equipment. A refundable deposit is required to ensure ClearStream® bins are returned clean, undamaged and on time.

Number of Bins	Refundable Deposit
1-5	\$100
6-10	\$200
11-15	\$300

- Cash or a deposit check is due when the bins are picked up (Charleston County does not deliver the bins). Make checks payable to: Charleston County Treasurer.
- Charleston County reserves the right to keep all or a portion of the deposit if the bins are not returned to 13 Romney Street within two business days following your event.
- Charleston County reserves the right to keep all or a portion of the deposit if the bins are not returned in the same condition in which they were received.

# Equipment

**PLEASE VISIT A  
RESOURCE  
RECOVERY STATION  
TO DISPOSE OF YOUR  
WASTE.**



*Post signs to direct event attendees to waste sorting stations.*

The success of any recycling program depends heavily on convenience. To maximize participation, the process must be easy. Charleston County's special event bins are both portable and highly visible, making them ideal for proper collection of recyclable materials. Charleston County Environmental Management recommends creating resource recovery stations located

strategically throughout the event for attendees to sort and dispose of their waste. Permanent receptacles that are not part of a station need to be securely closed and labeled with a sign that indicates where the nearest waste station is located.

Charleston County ClearStream® bins have color-coded labeled tops to aid patrons in the sorting process. The stations also come with clear bags to collect recyclables and transparent green compostable bags to collect compostable materials. The transparent bags allow event attendees to visibly match their waste with the contents of each bin. The provided bags fit the ClearStream® containers and are strong enough to transport the waste from the collection stations to a storage area.

Each ClearStream® bin consists of:

- Steel folding frame and lid
- Decal on lid to identify what items can be recycled
- 1-5 clear plastic or compostable bags (as needed)

Bin lids with the following decals are available:

- Recycling
- Compostables
- Trash



*ClearStream® bins come with folding frames, bags and labeled lids.*

The number of attendees at an event affects the amount of waste generated. This table is a helpful guide that can

be used to estimate the number of waste stations you will need.

Projected Number of Attendees	Number of Waste Stations Needed
200 or less	2
200 – 600	4
600 - 1,000	6
1,000 +	Contact CCEM

Events with more than 1,000 projected attendees may qualify for a larger collection container to be used in conjunction with the ClearStream® bins and serve as a behind-the-scenes storage area for collected recyclables. These larger collection containers are delivered and picked up by Charleston County for no charge. Not all events qualify and this equipment is limited, so please contact CCEM before including this in your recycling program plan.



*Larger containers are available for events with more than 1,000 projected attendees for collection of recyclable material.*

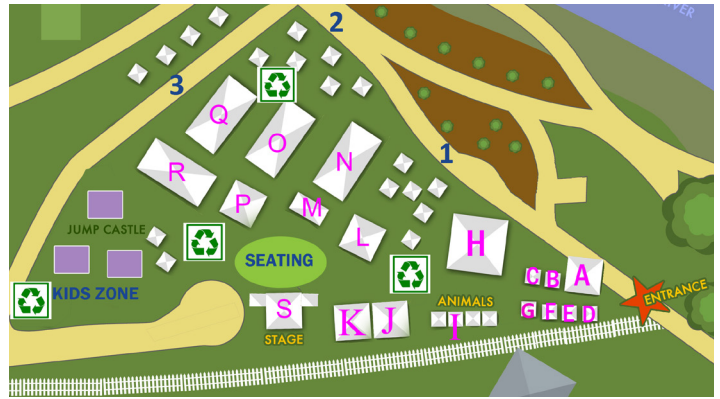


*Transparent bags and labeled lids makes waste sorting easy.*



## Container Placement & Signage

Always pair recycling and compost containers with trash containers to minimize contamination and maximize the amount of waste diverted. Put a sorting station close to where people will be consuming food and beverages. Primary exits can be high traffic areas in need of a recycling station, especially when concerts or other forms of entertainment signal the conclusion of a day's activities. Recycling stations must be easily accessible, should not intrude into vendor serving areas, and need to be immediately identifiable. It is also important to plan the location of recycling collection relative to the behind-the-scenes storage or pick-up area of bagged recyclables.



Place waste sorting stations in high traffic areas, such as the main exits and where food and drinks are served.



The target audience at a special event is a transient population that is present only for a matter of hours. Therefore, education must be immediately effective. Use graphics and provide bilingual information whenever possible. Place reminder signs around the event to inform patrons that recycling is offered and expected at the event. Live stage announcements or social media reminders are other ways to advertise the recycling program prior to and during the event. Use festival maps to note the location of recycling stations. Be sure to label both the recycling stations as well as the individual containers within each station.



Large, colorful signs with text and graphics effectively communicate how to properly sort waste at events.

## Sorting Guidelines

Recyclable materials collected at special events in Charleston County should be separated from non-recyclable items such as compostables and trash. All recyclable materials can be collected in one receptacle and the materials will later be sorted at the Charleston County Recycling Center.

### RECYCLING ONLY

ALL PAPER & CONTAINERS  
cardboard, paperboard, magazines, newspaper, office paper  
plastics #1-7, glass, aluminium & steel cans



Please empty and rinse containers. Caps may remain on.

NO FOOD WASTE  
NO PLASTIC BAGS  
NO STYROFOAM



### COMPOSTING ONLY

food scraps, napkins, waxy cardboard boxes,  
coffee & tea filters, cut floral, compostable serveware



NO PLASTIC, METAL, WOOD OR RAW MEAT



### GARBAGE ONLY

Examples: chip bags, ziploc bags, saran wrap,  
foil packaging, plastic utensils, rubber bands,  
twist ties, sponges, rubber gloves



NO FOOD WASTE  
NO RECYCLABLES



## Post-Event

Charleston County does not pick up recyclables collected at special events (unless your event has qualified for a larger collection container). Event staff is responsible for returning the ClearStream® bins to the Recycling Center at 13 Romney Street as well as hauling bagged recyclable materials to the recycling center or dropping off material at any Charleston County recycling [dropsite location or convenience center](#). To determine how much recyclable material your event generated, bring your recyclables back to the Recycling Center. Staff can weigh the recyclables for you, which can help set recycling goals for your future events. If the event is reoccurring, it is a good idea to record the challenges and successes of the recycling program to make improvements at the next event.

Don't forget to promote your green efforts. Event goers notice and appreciate recycling programs at special events. A successful recycling program is good PR!

## Additional Tips for a Green Event

- Eliminate packaging by using bulk containers for condiments instead of individually packaged servings.
- Use refillable or reusable containers like pitchers instead of canned or bottled products.
- Reuse decorations and props from year to year.
- Avoid non-recyclable containers and materials such as Styrofoam.
- Buy eco-friendly products such as those made with recycled content.



# Composting

Food scraps and food soiled paper often comprise a significant portion of waste from special events. By diverting food waste from the landfill, your event can enhance its public profile, attract sponsors, inspire positive changes in attendees and vendors, support Charleston County's 40% recycling goal, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If you intend to collect food waste at your event, contact Charleston County's Environmental Management Department at least two months prior to the event date to coordinate a successful plan to keep the waste out of the landfill and put to good use as compost.

Establish a food waste diversion goal and budget. Next, determine the best way for your event to divert food waste. Consider collecting unserved food and other usable items for donation to food banks or soup kitchens in addition to composting food scraps, soiled napkins, and used compostable serve ware. Work with food vendors to predetermine the types of food waste, serve ware, and packaging likely to be generated. Inform food vendors about food waste diversion expectations and encourage the use of compostable serve ware. Ask vendors to help spread the word to patrons about what materials can be composted.



*Composting at your event diverts food waste from the landfill and turns it into a nutrient-rich soil amendment.*

# Identifying Compostable Materials

## ACCEPTABLE FOOD WASTE MATERIALS



All fruits



All vegetables



Bread, dough, bakery items, pasta and grains



Coffee grounds and tea with filters



Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt)



Processed foods (pizza, cereal, chips, crackers, cookies, cakes, cooked meat, plate scrapings)



Eggs and egg shells



Consumable liquids



Cooked meats and fish, including shells and bones, wooden skewers and wooden cocktail sticks



Food soiled paper: paper bags, paper towels, and paper napkins; and waxed cardboard boxes

## ITEMS NOT ACCEPTED



No raw meat products (beef, poultry, pork, seafood)



No plastic bags, serve ware, utensils, twist ties, rubber bands



No fats, oils, grease or non consumable liquids (vegetable oil or lard)



No wood, metal, glass or other non food items

## Transportation of Collected Compost

Transportation of the collected compostable materials to the County’s composting facility must be arranged in advance. For smaller events generating a limited amount of food waste, the County encourages self-hauling of the material from the event site to the [Bees Ferry Compost Facility](#) (1344 Bees Ferry Road, Charleston, Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.). For larger events, contact a private food waste hauler to inquire about pricing to transport your organic material. Charleston County Government does not collect or haul food waste directly, but has collection partners listed below.



*Food waste haulers bring collected compostable materials to the County’s compost facility for processing.*

Food Waste Hauler	Contact	Phone Number	Website
Food Waste Disposal	Wayne Koeckeritz	(843) 991-2791	<a href="http://www.wastefwd.com">www.wastefwd.com</a>
Carolina Waste Services	Scott Fennell	(843) 576-1100	<a href="http://www.carolinawaste.com">www.carolinawaste.com</a>
Smart Recycling	Kevin Hill	(843) 834-7681	<a href="http://www.smartrecyclingsc.com">www.smartrecyclingsc.com</a>
Republic Services	David Mitchell	(843) 266-6199	<a href="http://www.republicservices.com">www.republicservices.com</a>
Fisher Recycling	Chris Fisher	(843) 554-6099	<a href="http://www.fisherrecycling.com">www.fisherrecycling.com</a>



*Charleston County’s Bees Ferry Compost Facility*

Charleston County offers ClearStream® compost collection containers and compostable bags for free of charge (with a refundable deposit). Food waste haulers will charge a service fee to cover their labor costs and tipping fees at the compost processing facility. For fees and service options, contact the food waste haulers directly. Ask if the hauler will consider waiving their fees in exchange for sponsorship recognition or find a third party sponsor to help cover the costs of composting.

## Food Donation

Food shows, banquets, and similar events often generate significant amounts of leftover, edible food and other items that can be donated. Contact food banks or similar agencies in advance of the event to find out what items are accepted and how they should be collected.



*Volunteers pack-up catering leftovers for donation.*