SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

GUIDE TO WASTE MANAGEMENT
for
SMALL to MEDIUM EVENTS

Before You Start

No matter what size and event, planning the collection and disposal of waste is essential.

One member of the committee needs to be responsible for waste management. They may need a team of helpers on the day.

Large events should consider employing a professional event manager to oversee all aspects of waste management.

Planning For Event Waste Management Is A Simple Step By Step Process

Step1: Identify the waste and recycling types/source and estimate the amount.

Step 2: Identify what can be recycled in your area and how waste & recycling is to be collected.

Step 3: Organise the right size bins . Bins may need liners. Ensure correct placement. If the bins are to be manually lifted then smaller bins may be necessary.

Step 4: Arrange for someone to record the amount of waste and recyclables. This is important so that you can plan for improvements at your next event.

Step 5: Communication tell your patrons and stall holders what you are trying to achieve and why it is good for the environment.

Highlands Regional Waste Management Group

The Sustainable Events Guide to Waste Management for Small to Medium Events has be prepared by the Highlands Regional Waste Management Group for distribution to event organisers within the Region.

April 2010

Download a copy
This guide is available for download from our website www.hrwmg.vic.gov.au/education/events

Disclaimer
The Sustainable Events Guide to Waste Management for Small to Medium Events has been developed to assist event organisers to manage waste and recycling at their event. Every effort has been made to ensure that the material in this guide is as accurate and useful as possible. The Highlands Regional Waste Management Group does not accept any responsibility for errors or omissions. Event organisers should assess the suitability of this material as it relates to their specific event.

Step1: <u>Identify</u> the waste and recycling types/source and <u>estimate</u> the amount.

It is important to work with prospective stall holders from the very first time you have contact with them. You should ask them to identify what they will be selling or distributing and what, therefore, waste or recyclable products will their stall generate. You may choose to ban problem products such as polystyrene cups or request stall holders to take all their waste away with them.

An MGB = mobile garbage bin or wheelie bin, usual size 240L, smaller ones are available

Example 1: BBQ and drink stall

- Food waste and serviettes – estimate 120L (half a wheelie bin)
- Aluminium cans and plastic drink containers – estimate 240L recyclables
- Boxes and plastic packaging – estimate 120L plastic - stack of flattened cardboard

Example 2: Country Festival

- Anticipated attendance 1000
- 6X food and drink stalls
    - Food waste and serviettes – estimate 120L each
    - Aluminium cans and plastic drink containers – estimate 240L recyclables each
    - Boxes and plastic packaging – estimate 120L plastic - stack of flattened cardboard each
- 6X information stalls
    - Boxes – stack of flattened cardboard each
    - Paper – estimate 60L, can go in commingled recycling bin
- Entry booth
    - Boxes – stack of flattened cardboard
    - Paper – estimate 60L, can go in commingled recycling bin

Step 2: Identify what can be <u>recycled in your area</u> and how waste & recycling is to be <u>collected.</u>

Council commingled kerbside recyclable collection takes paper, cardboard, steel cans, aluminium cans, glass and plastic containers (numbers 1 – 7).

If you are taking the waste to your local Council Transfer Station (Resource Recovery Centre) then you will be able to deposit recyclables there. You should also check and see if they would prefer the paper and cardboard to be separated.

Your Council may have Sustainable Events Recycling Trailer that allows for easy transport of the wheelie bins to the Transfer Station and should have enough space for flattened cardboard.

If your event is large enough you will probably employ a waste collection contactor. They will advise you about the appropriate bins or skips.

Example 1: BBQ and drink stall

- Waste – "X" to take wheelie bins to Transfer Station
- Aluminium cans and plastic drink containers (commingled) – "X" to take wheelie bins to Transfer Station
- Cardboard – "Company Y" Recyclers will collect

Example 2: Country Festival

- Waste
  - environment team to place all wheelie bins together behind the pavilion for collection
  - full wheelie bins to be swapped for empty ones during event if required, environment team not to allow them to get over full
  - "Company X" to collect and take to landfill
- Litter – environment team rostered to pick up litter
- Recyclables (aluminium cans, plastic drink bottles, paper)
  - environment team to empty wheelie bins into skip behind pavilion
  - bins to be emptied when ¾ full to avoid over filling
  - "Company X" to collect and take to Transfer Station
- Cardboard
  - flattened boxes to be placed in designated waste collection area back of house
  - "Company Y" Recyclers will collect

Step 3: Organise the right size bins and ensure correct placement.

Bins may need liners.

If the bins are to be manually lifted then smaller bins may be necessary or the hiring of a bin lifter.

Determine the number and size of bins and/or skips based on the waste estimated in Step 1 and the collection method from Step 2.

The cheapest wheelie bin liners are black and come on a roll, these are suitable for waste bins only.

If you need liners for the recyclables try to get clear plastic so that you can easily see if there is contamination. You must contact your local Transfer Station and get their agreement to accept recyclables in a bag.

Example 1: BBQ and drink stall

- 240L MGB for food waste & plastic packaging with liners
- 240L MGB for commingled recycling
- Wool bale or skip for cardboard - supplied by "Company Y"

Example 2: Country Festival

- Waste
  - 6X 240L MGB for food waste and plastic packaging
  - 2X spare bins for swapping over
  - "Company X" will be using a side-lift truck (standard garbage truck) so bin liners will not be required.
- Litter
  - Pick up tongs
- Recyclables (aluminium cans, plastic drink bottles, paper)
  - 6X 240l MGB
  - 2X spare bins for swapping over
  - Clear bin liners to be purchased to make it easier to empty MGB's. **Transfer Station have been contacted and agreed to accept recyclables in bags.**
- Cardboard
  - Wool bale or skip for cardboard - supplied by "Company Y"

Step 3: (cont.)

Hints for successful bin placement and litter reduction.

- Place a waste bin and a recycling bin next to each other
- **Never place a recycling bin on their own**
- Locate bins at disposal points – where people are eating – disposal does not always happen at the place of purchase.
- Identify disposal points by observation, watch where people are eating, you may have to rethink your original bin placement and move them to where they are needed.
- Bin placement must not interfere with pedestrian movement.
- Consider public safety and security when placing bins.
- Areas that are likely to become queues are not a good place for bin placement.
- Place bins away from walls.
- Regularly service bins & clean up any litter, **clean = clean.**
- How people move around and use a site determines the optimal placement of bins. Place the bins:
    - In accessible points that coincide with movement of people and catch their attention
    - Where people enter and exit to inform them of what is expected
    - **For the convenience of the user rather than the waste collector**
    - Where they can be effectively emptied and service during peak periods
- Half empty bins may mean they are placed in the wrong location - move them.
- Overflowing bins mean you need to increase the service cycle for the bins or place more bins in that area

Step 4: Arrange for someone to record the amount of waste and recyclables. This is important so that you can plan for improvements at your next event.

They will need to note

- the size of the bin or skip and how full it was, and
- was there any contamination (the wrong things in the wrong bin)

If you have contractors collecting waste and/or recyclables you should ensure that part of the contract agreement is that they provide data either by weight or volume.

Example 1: **Environment Team Report**

Waste

- 240L wheelie bin was full, there were a lot of plastic bottles and cans put in after the recycling bin overflowed

Recycling

- 240L bin was full before the end of stall

Cardboard

- Wool bale was half full

Diversion rate of waste from landfill was 50% plus cardboard
[volume of recycling/(volume of waste + volume of recycling) x 100 = %]

Note for next event

- Recyclables bottles and cans take up a lot of space so we need to have extra bins

1000 litres (L) = 1cubic metre (m^3)
$1m^3$ general waste = 0.15 tonnes
$1m^3$ commingled recyclables = 0.063 tonnes
$1m^3$ paper/cardboard = 0.1 tonnes

Example 2: **Environment Team Report**

Waste

- Visual assessment by environment team, contamination minimal, some plastic drink bottles
- 4X 240L full and 2X 240L half full = 1200L = $1.2m^3$

Recycling

- Visual assessment by environment team, contamination less than 10%, mainly take-away food packaging brought to the event
- $3m^3$ skip was half full = $1.5m^3$

Litter

- A team of two did a litter collection twice during the event
- The litter collected was mainly paper, lolly wrappers and cigarette butts

Cardboard

- Visual assessment by environment team, not all boxes had been flattened, no contamination
- $3m^3$ skip was half full = $1.5m^3$

Diversion of waste from landfill = 71.4%
[volume of recycling + cardboard/(volume of waste + volume of recycling = cardboard) x 100 = %]

Notes for next event

- Improve waste and recycling signage to reduce contamination
- Remind stall holders to flatten cardboard boxes

Step 5: Communication

Generally, people support initiatives that are good for the environment.

Therefore, promote the environmental credentials of your event at every possible occasion – media releases, adverts, PA announcements, signs, posters etc.

Tell prospective stallholders from the very beginning what you are trying to achieve and how they can help. e.g. no plastic bags.

Some communication is subtle

- get high-vis vests for the environmental team or specially printed brightly coloured t-shirts
- seeing the litter clean up team will prompt people to put rubbish in the bin

Internal communication is also important, make sure all members of the planning committee know how the waste is to be managed on the day and who is the contact person if there is an issue e.g. bin over flowing.

A competition such as 'guess the number of recycled cans in the bag' allows you to collect postcode data which is useful to identify where your audience is coming from as well as raising awareness about recycling.

A post event media release is a great way to thank your stall holders and patrons for helping your event to achieve "X%" diversion of waste from landfill

ADVANCED OPTIONS

Food waste - you may be able to arrange for food waste to be taken separately for compost, worm farm or chooks. This is likely to only apply to small amounts and be a very local arrangement. Large commercial composting operations do not usually like to take food waste from events as it is often highly contaminated with plastic cutlery.

Water - use can be minimised by having dual-flush toilets, automatic shut off taps, etc. You may not have any control over these things but you could write to the responsible authority and request an upgrade of the equipment.

Energy - outdoor events use solar energy! but if you are undercover look for natural lighting options and energy efficient globes.

If **public transport** is an option to attend your event, promote its use as part of your advertising.

Calculate the **carbon footprint** of your event. You might even like to buy **carbon offsets** and be a **carbon neutral** event.

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.slf.org.au/eventplanner the Sustainable Living Foundation has an online events planner

www.epa.vic.gov.au 'ecological footprint calculators'

www.originenergy.com.au 'the sustainable event'