

Zero-Waste Programs

As more and more businesses and organizations place a heightened focus on environmental stewardship and sustainability, **zero-waste programs are becoming popular all around the world**. Increased interest in environmental sustainability, the importance of recycling, and heightened awareness of climate change. From public schools to private businesses, these initiatives are playing vital roles in sustainability efforts.

In an effort to work towards zero-waste (or simply reduce waste and focus on sustainable practices), many businesses and organizations may participate in one or more of the following:

- **Organics diversion and/or composting**
- Restructuring waste collection systems
- Sustainable sourcing
- Reducing wasteful packaging
- Designing durable products - made to be used more than once
- Replacing disposable packaging with reusable or recyclable material
- Other changes to operations to increase sustainability

Often, zero-waste programs seek to integrate organics diversion as a means to reduce waste sent to landfills, save on waste hauling costs, and reduce their carbon footprint by returning carbon to the earth via the biological process of composting.



Organics diversion and composting are essential components of successful zero-waste programs. By separating organics from other waste streams, less material is sent to landfills and valuable compost is produced. Composting helps lower your carbon footprint and compost has the power to improve soil health and soil's ability to retain water.



It is important to note, all zero-waste programs and sustainability efforts must be effectively tailored for each individual organization - there is no "one size fits all" solution to reducing waste.

There are several key components of successful zero-waste efforts including: establishing a zero-waste team, understanding waste generation, sort stations and signage, knowledge of local and state laws and regulations, and education.

Establish a Zero-Waste Team

It is important to establish a zero-waste team representative of different departments within the organization. This will help organizational buy in and help ensure long term success. Effective zero-waste programs engage key personnel and often include: a zero-waste/sustainability coordinator or director, communications and outreach, and facilities services or external service providers.

Understanding Waste Generation

To ensure the highest level of success at reducing waste, it is critical to have a thorough understanding of how and where waste is generated. Often waste is generated across all points of operations including waste generated from: upstream activities, day to day operations, and downstream activities. Successful zero-waste efforts analyze where waste is generated and take steps to reduce or prevent waste, and then ensure proper and effective disposal of remaining waste such as recycling and composting.

Sort Stations and Signage

To ensure participation and to eliminate confusion (which will reduce contamination), it is important to have readily available sort stations sufficient for all waste streams with effective signage and messaging in addition to on-going educational messaging engagement with employees, fans, residents, etc. When implementing sort stations and signage, be sure to consider the following:

- Consistent color coding signs and bins
- Photos of products on signs to help eliminate confusion
- Multiple sort locations
- Effective sign placement (for example, above sorting stations)



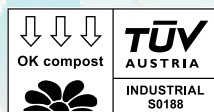
The Zero-Waste Handbook

The Natur-Tec® Zero-Waste Handbook is intended to help as a reference guide to help you familiarize yourself and succeed with zero-waste programs and other sustainability initiatives. You'll find expert insight on topics such as: organics diversion, certifications, how to ensure long-term success, and much more!

Visit www.naturbag.com/zero-waste to learn more about zero-waste!



Certifications



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