

Restaurant Pollution Prevention and Waste Reduction



Fact Sheet

Food service establishments can save money and protect the environment by reducing waste and practicing pollution prevention.



Remember that participating in a pollution prevention program can create an improved public image for your business.



ENERGY AND WATER USE

- Conduct an energy audit to determine ways to conserve energy and cut expenditures. Install energy-efficient light bulbs and motion-sensitive lights, turn off lights at the end of the evening, turn off machines not in use, install programmable mercury-free thermostats, and replace outdated equipment and appliances with more energy-efficient models.



- Reduce water consumption by repairing or replacing leaky water faucets, turning off water faucets and hoses when not in use, installing low-volume toilets, installing low-flow faucets, and serving water to guests who request it rather than as a standard service. Limiting water service will also reduce the number of glasses that need to be washed.



- Reduce costs of lawn care by watering lightly and frequently to reduce the potential for disease and insect damage. Michigan grasses require only 0.5 to 1.5 inches of water per week. A 15- to 20-minute daily watering during dry weather is usually sufficient.



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SOLID WASTE

- Procure recycled and recyclable products.
- Work with suppliers to reduce packaging, thereby reducing disposal costs.
- Most beer and soft drinks can be served on tap, reducing both the costs of buying beverages and disposing of recyclable cans and bottles.



- Switch from disposable items such as napkins, utensils, placemats, cups, trays, and single-serving condiment packages to reusable items to reduce solid waste disposal costs.



- Separate newspaper, office paper, tin and bimetal cans, glass, plastics (high density polyethylene-HDPE, polyethylene terephthalate-PET), corrugated cardboard, wooden pallets, aluminum, kitchen grease, food waste, and other recyclables from solid waste and implement a recycling program. Use color-coded collection bins in the kitchen and bar for easy identification.



- Check with your waste hauler and ask what types of recycling services are available. Look for haulers who are flexible and willing to work with you to design a recycling program based on your needs. Ask your waste hauler for advice about keeping recyclables and wet waste separate.

- Let your patrons know you recycle. If your establishment is self-serve, post signs letting customers know that you are recycling and what they should do with their bottles and cans. Either put out a bin for these items or have customers leave them on a designated counter for collection by your staff.



HAZARDOUS WASTE

- Institute a hazardous waste collection program. Many commercial cleaning products contain hazardous materials such as caustics or strong acids. Never pour hazardous wastes down the drain. Never mix different wastes. If possible, consider using alternative materials. Look for "non-toxic," "non-petroleum based," "free of ammonia, phosphates, dye, or perfume," or "readily biodegradable" on the label. Avoid chlorinated compounds, petroleum distillates, phenols, and formaldehyde. Phosphate is an aquatic plant nutrient that can cause excessive growth of aquatic algae and water quality problems after the detergent is washed down the drain. Ask your supplier about the many phosphate-free, biodegradable detergents on the market.
- Practice good housekeeping to reduce pest populations and the need for chemical controls. Keep doors shut when not in use; place weather stripping on doors; caulk and seal openings in walls; install or repair

screens; install air curtains; keep vegetation, shrubs, and wood mulch at least one foot away from structures. Store food and waste in tightly sealed containers that are inaccessible to pests.

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs combine chemical, cultural, and biological practices into one program to manage pest populations. IPM principles incorporate preventive practices, remedial practices, and economic thresholds, thus reducing the amount of chemicals used by applying pesticides only when necessary and at the minimum effective rate. Use less soluble, less leachable, less persistent, and less toxic pesticides whenever possible.
- Store all fertilizer and pesticide containers safely to prevent spills and dispose of the empty containers properly. Never store these products with food products.



FOOD WASTE

- Use a "first-in, first-out" inventory policy for raw materials to prevent them from exceeding their shelf life. Rotate perishable stock at every delivery to minimize waste. Strict inventory control is the most effective and cost efficient way to prevent usable materials from needlessly becoming waste. Improperly stored, labeled, or outdated food becomes waste.

- Buy in bulk to reduce container waste but avoid buying too much of a product that might spoil. Buy locally to minimize transportation costs and to increase local economy.
- Collect and send used grease to a renderer. By avoiding disposal of kitchen grease down the drain, you will minimize clogging of pipes, use of toxic chemicals used to clear drains, and unnecessary discharge to your sewer system resulting in wastewater treatment upsets. Find a rendering company that will provide storage barrels and free pick-up service. Local chambers of commerce, county agricultural extension agencies, commercial food suppliers, or the telephone book (under tallow or rendering company) can provide information on area rendering companies.
- Inspect and clean grease traps and grease interceptors often enough to prevent clogs, spills, and overflows. NEVER pour grease, oil, or large quantities of oil liquids such as sauces or salad dressings down a sink, floor drain, storm drain, or into a dumpster.

STORM WATER

- You may be polluting the storm water if you rinse wash water down a storm drain, spill materials or wastes in your parking lot without cleaning them up, or allow materials or waste stored outside to leak. Prevent these activities from occurring and stencil storm drains "Dump no waste—drains to river" (lake, stream, etc.).



Fact Sheet

- Clean equipment such as floor mats, exhaust filters, garbage cans, carts, or tray racks in a designated indoor area such as a janitor/utility/mop sink or floor area with a drain connected to the sanitary sewer.
- Dumpsters used for garbage should be protected from rainwater, and loading docks should be kept clean to avoid unwanted substances from entering storm drains.
- Some helpful hints for dumpster maintenance include keeping the dumpster lid closed to keep out rain water, replacing damaged or missing lids as soon as possible, never placing liquid waste or leaky garbage bags into a dumpster, keeping dumpsters or the dumpster enclosure locked to prevent

illegal dumping, not hosing out the dumpster interior, applying absorbent over any fluids spilled in the dumpster, sweeping up litter, and replacing leaking dumpsters.

- Never pour wash water down a storm drain or gutter. Use the mop sink for proper disposal.

RESOURCES

- Contact your local health department for additional information.

