



**AGENDA**  
**COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**Wednesday, September 15, 2021**  
**6:00 PM – Remote Access Only**

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**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Commissioners: Cathlin Atchison, Bryce Ebrahimian, Michelle Beritzhoff-Law, Meredith Keet, Margaux Keiser, Peter Wilk - Chair

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS** *(No action may be taken)*

*All correspondence received prior to 12 NOON on the day of the meeting will be distributed to the Commissioners to review. The Committee Members may not discuss Written Communications to any significant degree but may request issues raised be placed on a future agenda.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – July 21, 2021

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Restaurant Guide/Compostable and Biodegradable Take Out Materials

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

**ADJOURNMENT** to October 20, 2021

**Notice:** The Commission on the Environment meets monthly 6:00 PM. Meetings are Remote Access Only.

**Agenda and Agenda Packet Materials:** The Commission on the Environment Agenda is available on the City's website: [www.cityofcapitola.org/](http://www.cityofcapitola.org/) on Friday prior to the Wednesday meeting. If you need additional information please contact the Public Works Department at (831) 475-7300.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Disability-related aids or services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Assisted listening devices are available for individuals with hearing impairments at the meeting in the City Council Chambers. Should you require special accommodations to participate in the meeting due to a disability, please contact the City Clerk's office at least 24-hours in advance of the meeting at 831-475-7300. In an effort to accommodate individuals with environmental sensitivities, attendees are requested to refrain from wearing perfumes and other scented products.

**NOTICE OF REMOTE ACCESS ONLY**

In accordance with the current Santa Cruz County Health Order outlining social distancing requirements and Executive Order N-29-20 from the Executive Department of the State of California, the Commission on the Environment meeting is not physically open to the public and in person attendance cannot be accommodated.

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82700127426?pwd=Rk5Da0FUSXFzYTNwZ1J6dHpvL3QzZz09>

Meeting ID: 827 0012 7426

Passcode: 268893

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

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Meeting ID: 827 0012 7426

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82700127426>

**Comment via email:**

Comments and additional material may be sent to the Commission via [CapitolaDPW@ci.capitola.ca.us](mailto:CapitolaDPW@ci.capitola.ca.us) by 12NOON on the day of the meeting for distribution to Commission members.

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Commission on the Environment**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**July 21, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioners Present: Cathlin Atchison, Michelle Beritzhoff-Law, Meredith Keet, Margaux Keiser, Peter Wilk

Commissioners Absent: Bryce Ebrahimian

City Staff Present: Steve Jesberg, Danielle Uharriet

Chairperson Wilk called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

**WRITTEN & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – March 17, 2021 minutes were approved (Beritzhoff-Law/Keiser)

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Gas Powered Leaf Blower Ban

Staff presented comparison information of emissions, particulate matter and noise levels from gas-powered and electric/battery powered landscape equipment (leaf blowers, lawn mowers, trimmers/edgers/cutters and chainsaws).

Peter Wilk stated the city's ordinance currently regulates leaf blower hours, noise levels, emission and dust control. The EPA regulates emissions for two and four stroke engines. The noise is a greater issue in residential neighborhoods; and noise from older model leaf blowers may be louder than new equipment. A gas-powered leaf-blower ban may not be any better than the current ordinance since electric blowers and other landscape equipment create similar noise, emissions and dust problems; and promoting electric leaf blowers creates an issue with battery recycling.

Cathlin Atchison stated noise is the overall issue. Noise is difficult to enforce, is intrusive and is damaging to the environment. A gas-powered leaf blower ban could create an economic burden for landscapers to replace equipment. There should be a reasonable transition period and an equipment replacement incentive program. Cathlin commented leaf blowers and noise were issues discussed by the city 12-14 years ago.

Meredith Keet concurred with other commissioners that the existing city ordinance addresses the key issues with gas-powered leaf blowers. She supported an incentive strategy to ease the economic burden if there is a required switch to electric leaf blowers.

Margaux Keiser agreed that noise is the primary issue. There are various types of landscape equipment that produce noise greater than gas-powered leaf blowers. The current ordinance regulates leaf-blower hours, but enforcement is difficult. A gas-powered leaf blower ban could be viewed similarly as new regulations to eliminate gas appliances in new construction.

Michelle Beritzhoff-Law commented the information provided by Peter Wilk and staff emphasizes the fact that noise, emissions, dust, and sediment issues are all associated with various types of landscape equipment not just gas-powered leaf blowers. Consistency in regulating landscape equipment would be a more balanced policy approach. Michelle suggested seeking community feedback before proceeding with a ban. Additionally, a plan for enforcement of an ordinance is key to the success of a ban. An issue with the ban in Los Gatos is the lack of enforcement.

Peter Wilk proposed the Commission send the City Council an executive summary of the issues identified by the Commission, include all the research information presented, and let the City Council decide how, and if they want to elevate the issue of banning gas-powered leaf blowers.

Margaux Keiser supported an executive summary. She was interested surveying the community's opinion about leaf blowers.

Motion to send the City Council an executive summary of gas-powered leaf blowers and landscape equipment, with no specific recommendation. (Atchison/Keiser) Vote: 5-0

## 2. Rispin Park Riparian Restoration

Michelle Beritzhoff-Law inquired about the possibility of a cross commission collective effort. The Arts & Cultural Commission receives funds from permits to be invested in the community, perhaps tie art with the natural habitat.

Peter Wilk inquired about \$350,000 grant for Rispin improvements, and availability of funds in the Community Tree/Forest Management fund previously used for Peery Park riparian work.

Steve Jesberg commented the Rispin Park Plan is proceeding with funding from various city funds and an anticipated grant. The park plan boundary does not include the riparian areas. The Art & Cultural funds citywide art projects, not riparian restoration work. Steve clarified the \$350,00 grant funded the ADA compliant pathways for Rispin Park. The Community Tree funds are reserved for required tree replanting in the Beach & Village Parking Lot. Once Rispin Park is developed other improvements can be made to the surrounding riparian areas.

The COE concurred to postpone riparian restoration work until the park plan improvements are complete.

## **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Michelle Beritzhoff-Law stated progress on the informational brochure for food businesses/restaurants has been delayed. She has researched the city's fines in comparison to other agencies but would like COE input on the direction of information to provide businesses. She recommended inform and assist with resources before enforcing fines. She observed enforcement during COVID-19 has been minimal.

Peter Wilk recalled enforcement is done on a complaint basis only.

Margaux Keiser commented Village businesses comply with the ordinance, but corporations such as McDonalds do not.

Cathlin Atchison suggested an informed community will tend to support businesses that follow the ordinance. Education is key to the success of the ordinance enforcement.

Meredith Keet stated there is no infrastructure, no facility to support the process of a compostable takeout container from restaurant to home. Container waste goes into the trash, not recycling.

Steve Jesberg stated there has been no relaxation of rules during COVID-19; enforcement has not changed and continues as complaint basis only.

Peter Wilk stated this is not agenda and should be scheduled for the next meeting. He suggested the COE meet every other month to ensure a quorum. The August 18<sup>th</sup> meeting was canceled; next regular meeting will be September 15, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT** to September 15, 2021

Approved at the meeting of September 15, 2021

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Danielle Uharriet  
Environmental Projects Manager

**CITY OF CAPITOLA  
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT  
Agenda Report**

**Meeting Date: September 15, 2021**

**Agenda Item: 1**

**Subject: Restaurant Guide/Compostable and Biodegradable Take Out Materials**

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The Commission Work Item #1: Develop an informational guide for distribution to restaurants and food vendors about Capitola's environmentally acceptable packaging materials ordinance and enforcement guidance. Information to be incorporated into the educational guide are ordinance requirements, explanation of enforcement, information on proper disposal (trash, recycling, compostable), provide options and resources.

The following resources are attached:

1. Capitola Municipal Code Chapter 8.36
2. Capitola flyer
3. GreenWaste Wasteline Newsletter
4. GreenWaste Recycle Guide
5. Surfrider Foundation Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide
6. ReThink Disposable COVID-19 Reusable Food Service Ware

## Chapter 8.36

# ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE PACKAGING MATERIALS

Sections:

[8.36.010 Findings and intent.](#)

[8.36.020 Definitions.](#)

[8.36.030 Prohibited food service ware.](#)

[8.36.035 Prohibited retail sales.](#)

[8.36.040 Required biodegradable and compostable disposable food service ware.](#)

[8.36.050 Exemptions.](#)

[8.36.060 Liability and enforcement.](#)

[8.36.070 Violations – Penalties.](#)

[8.36.080 Study.](#)

### 8.36.010 Findings and intent.

The city council finds and declares:

- A. The city has a duty to protect the natural environment, the economy, and the health of its citizens.
- B. Effective ways to reduce the negative environmental impacts of throw-away food service ware include reusing food service ware and using compostable and biodegradable take-out materials made from renewable resources such as paper, corn starch and sugarcane.
- C. Polystyrene foam is a common environmental pollutant as well as a nonbiodegradable substance that is commonly used as food service ware by food vendors operating in the city.
- D. There continues to be no meaningful recycling of polystyrene foam food service ware and biodegradable or compostable food service ware is an affordable, safe, more ecologically sound alternative.
- E. Affordable biodegradable or compostable food service ware products are increasingly available for several food service applications such as cold cups, plates and hinge containers and these products are more ecologically sound than polystyrene foam materials and can be turned into a compost product.
- F. New Leaf Markets, Grinds Coffee Shop, and other Capitola businesses have successfully eliminated the use of polystyrene and nonbiodegradable packaging materials in the operation of their businesses.
- G. The Oakland Coliseum has successfully replaced its cups with biodegradable cornstarch cups and has shown an overall cost savings due to organics recycling.
- H. Over one hundred fifty-five businesses in Oakland engage in organics recycling and it has been demonstrated that the use of biodegradable or compostable food service ware can reduce waste disposal costs when the products are taken to composting facilities as part of an organics recycling program rather than disposed in a landfill.

I. The natural compost product from these biodegradable or compostable materials is used as fertilizer for farms and gardens, thereby moving towards a healthier zero waste system.

J. Disposable food service ware constitutes a large portion of the litter in Capitola's lagoon, waterways and storm drains, and on the beaches, streets, parks and public places and the cost of managing this litter is high and rising.

K. Polystyrene foam is notorious as a pollutant that breaks down into smaller, nonbiodegradable pieces that are ingested by marine life and other wildlife thus harming or killing them.

L. Due to the physical properties of polystyrene, the EPA states "that such materials can also have serious impacts on human health, wildlife, the aquatic environment and the economy."

M. A 1986 EPA report on solid waste named the polystyrene manufacturing process as the fifth largest creator of hazardous waste in the United States.

N. In the product manufacturing process as well as the use and disposal of the products, the energy consumption, greenhouse gas effect, and total environmental effect, polystyrene's environmental impacts were second highest, behind aluminum, according to the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

O. Styrene, a component of polystyrene, is a known hazardous substance that medical evidence and the Food and Drug Administration suggests leaches from polystyrene containers into food and drink.

P. Styrene is a suspected carcinogen and neurotoxin which potentially threatens human health.

Q. Styrene has been detected in the fat tissue of every man, woman and child tested by the EPA in a 1986 study.

R. The general public is not typically warned of any potential hazard, particularly in the immigrant and non-English-speaking community.

S. Due to these concerns nearly one hundred cities have banned polystyrene foam food service ware including several California cities, and many local businesses and several national corporations have successfully replaced polystyrene foam and other nonbiodegradable food service ware with affordable, safe, biodegradable products.

T. Restricting polystyrene foam products that are not wholly encapsulated or encased by a more durable material and replacing non-biodegradable food service ware with biodegradable food service ware products in Capitola will further protect the public health and safety of the residents of Capitola, the city of Capitola's natural environment, waterways and wildlife, would advance the city's goal of developing a sustainable city, advance the city's goal of zero waste by 2020 and fulfill Article 10 of the Environmental Accords, whereby Capitola partnered with other cities across the globe in signing a commitment to eliminate or restrict the use of one chemical or environmental hazard every year. (Ord. [964](#) § 1, 2011; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)



## 8.36.020 Definitions.

Unless otherwise expressly stated, whenever used in this chapter the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below:

- A. "Affordable" means purchasable by the food vendor for same or less purchase cost than the non-biodegradable, non-polystyrene foam alternative.
- B. "ASTM standard" means meeting the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) international standards D6400 or D6868 for biodegradable and compostable plastics.
- C. "Biodegradable" means the entire product or package will completely break down and return to nature, i.e., decompose into elements found in nature within a reasonably short period of time after customary disposal.
- D. "Compostable" means all materials in the product or package will break down into, or otherwise become part of, usable compost (e.g., soil-conditioning material, mulch) in a safe and timely manner in an appropriate composting program or facility, or in a home compost pile or device. Compostable disposable food service ware includes ASTM standard bio-plastics (plastic-like products) that are clearly labeled, preferably with a color symbol, such that any compost collector and processor can easily distinguish the ASTM standard compostable plastic from non-ASTM standard compostable plastic.
- E. "City facilities" mean any building, structure or vehicles owned or operated by the city of Capitola, its agent, agencies, departments and franchisees.
- F. "Customer" means any person obtaining prepared food, merchandise or product from a restaurant or retail food vendor, or retail vendor.
- G. "Disposable food service ware" means all containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, forks, spoons, knives and other items that are designed for one-time use and on, or in, which any restaurant, retail vendor or retail food vendor directly places or packages prepared foods or which are used to consume foods. This includes, but is not limited to, service ware for takeout foods and/or leftovers from partially consumed meals prepared at restaurants, sold at restaurants, retail vendors or retail food vendors.
- H. "Food vendor" means any restaurant or retail food vendor located or operating within the city of Capitola.
- I. "Polystyrene foam" means and includes blown polystyrene and expanded and extruded foams (sometimes called Styrofoam, a Dow Chemical Co. trademarked form of polystyrene foam insulation) which are thermoplastic petrochemical materials utilizing a styrene monomer and processed by any number of techniques including, but not limited to, fusion of polymer spheres (expandable bead polystyrene), injection molding, foam molding, and extrusion-blow molding (extruded foam polystyrene). Polystyrene foam is generally used to make cups, bowls, plates, trays, clamshell containers, meat trays and egg cartons.

J. "Prepared food" means food or beverages, which are served, packaged, cooked, chopped, sliced, mixed, brewed, frozen, squeezed or otherwise prepared on the food vendor's premises or within the city of Capitola. For the purposes of this ordinance, prepared food includes raw, butchered meats, fish and/or poultry sold from a butcher case or similar retail appliance. Prepared food may be eaten either on or off the premises, also known as "takeout food."

K. "Product" means any product such as coolers, cups, bowls, plates, clamshells, containers, ice chests, packing peanuts or other packing materials, beach or pool toys, or any other product or merchandise containing polystyrene foam that is not encapsulated or encased by a more durable material.

L. "Restaurant" means any establishment located within the city of Capitola that sells prepared food for consumption on, near, or off its premises by customers. Restaurant for purposes of this chapter includes itinerant restaurants, pushcarts and vehicular food vendors.

M. "Retail food vendor" means any store, shop, sales outlet, or other establishment, including a grocery store or a delicatessen, other than a restaurant, located within the city of Capitola that sells prepared food.

N. "Retail vendor" means any store that sells goods or merchandise located or operating within the city of Capitola.

O. "Special events promoter" means an applicant for any special events permit issued by the city or any city employee(s) responsible for any city organized special event. (Ord. [964](#) § 2, 2011; Ord. [939](#) § 1, 2009; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)

### **8.36.030 Prohibited food service ware.**

A. Except as provided in Section [8.36.050](#), food vendors are prohibited from providing prepared food to customers in disposable food service ware that uses polystyrene foam.

B. All city facilities are prohibited from using polystyrene foam disposable food service ware and all city departments and agencies will not purchase or acquire polystyrene foam disposable food service ware for use at city facilities.

C. City franchisees, special event promoters, contractors and vendors doing business with the city shall be prohibited from using polystyrene foam disposable food service ware in the city of Capitola. (Ord. [964](#) § 3, 2011; Ord. [939](#) § 1, 2009; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)

### **8.36.035 Prohibited retail sales.**

No retail vendor or special event promoter in the city of Capitola may sell, rent or otherwise provide any polystyrene foam product which is not wholly encapsulated or encased within a more durable product, except as exempted in Section [8.36.050](#). This specifically includes, but is not limited to, cups, plates, bowls, clamshells and other products intended primarily for food service use, as well as coolers, containers, ice chests, pool or beach toys, packing peanuts or other packaging materials. (Ord. [964](#) § 4, 2011)

### 8.36.040 Required biodegradable and compostable disposable food service ware.

- A. All food vendors using any disposable food service ware will use biodegradable or compostable disposable food service ware unless they can show a biodegradable or compostable product is not available for a specific application or does not exist. A food vendor may charge a “take out fee” to customers to cover the cost difference.
- B. All city facilities will use biodegradable or compostable disposable food service ware.
- C. City franchises, special events promoter, contractors and vendors doing business with the city will use biodegradable or compostable disposable food service ware unless they can show a biodegradable or compostable product is not available for a specific application or does not exist. (Ord. [964](#) § 5, 2011; Ord. [939](#) § 1, 2009; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)

### 8.36.050 Exemptions.

- A. Prepared foods prepared or packaged outside the city of Capitola are exempt from the provisions of this chapter. Purveyors of food prepared or packaged outside the city of Capitola are encouraged to follow the provisions of this chapter.
- B. Food vendors will be exempted from the provisions of this chapter for specific items or types of disposable food service ware if the city manager or designee finds that a biodegradable or compostable alternative does not exist.
- C. To apply for an exemption from the requirement set forth in Section [8.36.040](#), a food vendor must submit an application to the city manager. The application shall include all information necessary for the city manager or the manager’s designee to make a decision, including, but not limited to, documentation showing factual support for the claimed exemption.
- D. Disposable food service ware composed entirely of aluminum is exempt from the provisions of this chapter.
- E. Meat trays are exempt from the provisions of this chapter.
- F. Products wholly encapsulated or encased by another non-polystyrene product, are exempt from the provisions of this chapter. Examples include surfboards, boats, life preservers, construction materials, craft supplies and durable coolers not principally composed of polystyrene.
- G. Emergency Supply and Services Procurement: In a situation deemed by the city manager to be an emergency for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety, city facilities, food vendors, retail vendors, city franchises, contractors and vendors doing business with the city shall be exempt from the provisions of this chapter. (Ord. [964](#) § 6, 2011; Ord. [939](#) § 1, 2009; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)

### 8.36.060 Liability and enforcement.

- A. The city manager or designee will have primary responsibility for enforcement of this chapter. The city manager or designee is authorized to promulgate regulations and to take any and all other actions reasonable and necessary to enforce this chapter, including, but not limited to, entering the premises of any food or retail vendor to verify compliance.
- B. City facilities, food vendors, retail food vendors, retail vendors and restaurants will be given three months from the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter to comply with the provisions herein.
- C. If, after the first three months of the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter, the city manager or designee determines that a violation of this chapter occurred, he or she will issue a written warning notice to the retail food establishment that a violation has occurred, specifying a three month time period for the food or retail vendor to conform to the provisions of this chapter.
- D. Violation or failure to comply with any of the requirements of this chapter shall constitute an infraction pursuant to Title [4](#) of the Capitola Municipal Code.
- E. The city attorney may seek legal, injunctive, or other equitable relief to enforce this chapter. (Ord. [964](#) § 7, 2011; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)

### 8.36.070 Violations – Penalties.

- A. If the city manager or designee determines that a violation of this chapter has occurred, he or she will issue a written warning notice to the food or retail vendor or special event promoter that a violation has occurred, and give the offending party three months to conform to the provisions of this chapter.
- B. If the food or retail vendor or special events promoter has subsequent violations of this chapter, the following penalties will apply:
1. A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars for the first violation after the warning notice is given.
  2. A fine not exceeding two hundred dollars for the second violation after the warning notice is given.
  3. A fine not exceeding five hundred dollars for the third and any future violations after the warning notice is given. (Ord. [964](#) § 8, 2011; Ord. [939](#) § 1, 2009; Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)

### 8.36.080 Study.

One year after the effective date of the ordinance codified in this chapter, the city manager will conduct a study on the effectiveness of this chapter. (Ord. [913](#) § 2, 2006)



# Rules for Restaurants in Capitola

To protect the environment, reduce plastics and to encourage the recycling and composting of food service waste, all disposable service ware provided to customers in the City of Capitola must be compostable or biodegradable.

## This includes:



- No plastic straws (paper is acceptable)
- No plastic stir sticks (wood is fine)
- All cups (hot or cold) must be compostable.
- All disposable cutlery must be compostable.
- No Styrofoam
- No #6 polystyrene products (including hot cup lids).
- All disposable containers must be compostable

**These rules apply to restaurants, grocery stores, food trucks, special events, and any other business or event where food is sold.**



Talk to your food service supplier about available products. Many suitable products are available from major distributors. To be sure a product meets the requirements, check the web site of the Biodegradable Products Institute, [www.bpiworld.org](http://www.bpiworld.org).

For more information, contact the City of Capitola at (831) 475-7300 or go to the City web site at [www.cityofcapitola.org](http://www.cityofcapitola.org).



# WASTELINE

A Publication for GreenWaste Recovery Customers in the City of Capitola

Fall 2019



## Recycle Right!

The global recycling market is in turmoil. Among the recent changes are much stricter standards for what recyclers will accept.



### **CLEAN and DRY.**

Just a little moisture can spoil an entire load of paper. Food residue in containers makes marketing them almost impossible. Scrape and lightly rinse containers to remove as much food as possible. Empty containers of all liquids and give them time to dry before tossing them in your recycling bin.



### **SORT THOROUGHLY.**

Separate all of your paper, plastic and other recyclables from each other and place loosely in the mixed recyclables container. Loose material is best, but if you must use a plastic bag, please use a clear bag so sorters at the processing facility can identify the contents quickly!



### **Be a SAVVY SHOPPER!**

Avoid plastic and excessive packaging wherever you can. Buy durable goods and items packed in reusable packaging.



### **TAKE IT BACK!**

Paint, used motor oil, batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, leftover medicines and used sharps can often be taken back to the store. None of these products should ever go in your trash or recycling bins.



Remittance Address:  
GreenWaste Recovery, P.O. Box 11089, San Jose, CA 95103-1089

We at GreenWaste "Think Differently" and appreciate your suggestions and comments. Please call us today and let us know how we are doing at (800) 665-2209 or (831) 426-2711, or visit us on the web at [www.greenwaste.com](http://www.greenwaste.com)

# Compostable And Biodegradable Food Service Ware



Food service businesses in the City of Capitola offering disposable service ware are required to use biodegradable or compostable products. This includes all take-out and eat-in single-use disposable products such as containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, forks, spoons, knives, straws, and other products designed for one-time use.

Capitola businesses have been contacted, and the City will be following up as questions arise. We appreciate everyone's help in keeping Capitola a clean, safe and desirable place to live and work.

## Composting Requirements

Under state laws, many local schools, restaurants, grocery stores, and other businesses are now required to separate all organic waste for collection, including food scraps and outdated food. GreenWaste Recovery offers organics collection service for City of Capitola business that fall under the state requirements. If you need to sign up for this service, please contact GreenWaste Recovery at **(831) 426-2711**.



## Recycle Holiday Trees

GreenWaste will pick up your undecorated holiday tree on your regular collection day from January 2-17, 2020. You do not need to call to schedule a pickup. Please remove the stand, cut the tree to approximately 6-foot lengths, and place curbside before 7 AM on your regular collection day. Flocked trees are NOT accepted.

## Holiday Pickup Schedule

Collection of Garbage, Recyclables, and Yard Trimmings will NOT occur on Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's Day. If your regular collection day falls on or after one of these holidays, your collection will be delayed by one day.



### NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
24	25	26	27	28	→ 29 →	30



### DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
22	23	24	25	→ 26 →	27 →	28



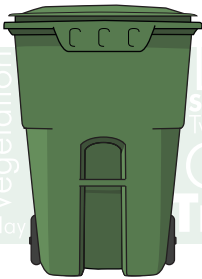
### JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1	→ 2 →	3 →	4

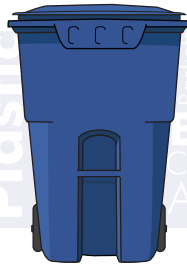
# CAPITOLA

## RESIDENTIAL RECYCLE GUIDE

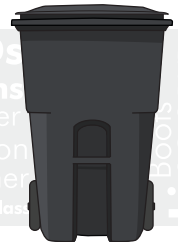
for **Yard Waste**, **Recyclables** and **Garbage**



Flowers  
Vegetation  
Hay  
Landscape vegetation  
Stumps  
Twigs and  
Flax  
Cactus  
Sawdust  
Leaves  
Christmas trees  
Bushes  
Succulents  
Shrubs  
Grass clippings  
Tree trimmings  
Branches  
Construction lumber



Bubble wrap  
Toys  
Magazines  
Newspaper  
Cardboard  
Frozen food bags  
Envelopes  
Can lids  
Plastic  
Baby wipe containers  
Detergent bottles  
Coupons  
Paper  
Cereal and cracker boxes  
Nuts and bolts  
Cameras  
Junk mail  
Keys  
Glass  
Beverage bottles  
Colored or construction paper  
Aerosol cans  
Metal



Styrofoam  
Cloth  
Foam  
Diapers  
CDs  
DVDs  
Shoes  
Burlap  
Pillows  
Carpet and rugs  
Meat trays  
Aseptic containers  
Carbon paper  
Audio and video tapes  
Latex gloves  
Vinyl  
Wool  
Cotton  
Leather  
Speakers  
Straws  
Rubber bands  
Corks  
Blue Glass  
Stuffed animals  
Linen  
Boots



**RECYCLABLES** Please place all recyclable materials together in your blue recyclables container.

All items must fit inside the recyclables container with the lid closed. Extra items may be set out in a 32-gallon container or paper bag.

**METAL** *Empty and rinse food and product containers*

- Aerosol cans (*empty and non-hazardous*)
- Aluminum foil, foil trays and pans (*clean*)
- Aluminum pie pans
- Beverage and soda cans
- Can lids - metal
- Car parts - small (*no fluids*)
- Doors and screens\*
- Electrical motors
- Food and soup cans
- Furniture\* (e.g., chairs, tables)
- Hangers - metal/wire
- Keys
- Lids and caps - metal (e.g., from glass bottles, jars)
- Nuts and bolts
- Paint cans (*remove excess paint, let residue dry*)
- Pet food cans
- Pipes
- Plumbing fixtures
- Pots and pans
- Propane/gas tanks\* (*empty*)
- Scrap metal\*
- Screws and nails
- Sporting goods - metal
- Tools - metal
- Toys - metal
- Umbrellas - metal
- Utensils - metal

**GLASS** *Empty and rinse food and product container*

- Beverage bottles
- Broken glass
- Dishware - glass
- Food jars
- Windows - uncoated/unlaminated
- Wine bottles

**PAPER** *Staples and tape are acceptable*

- Books - hardback and softback
- Carbonless paper (e.g., receipts)
- Cardboard - unwaxed (*flattened*)
- Cereal and cracker boxes (*remove liners*)
- Coffee cups - paper
- Colored or construction paper
- Computer paper
- Coupons
- Egg cartons - cardboard
- Envelopes (*plastic window OK*)
- Frozen food packaging - cardboard
- Gift wrap (*no metallic/foil*)
- Juice boxes and cartons
- Junk mail
- Magazines and catalogs
- Mailers - cardboard (e.g., FedEx, UPS)
- Milk and cream cartons
- Newspaper - clean (*including inserts*)
- Office paper
- Paper bags
- Paper cups and plates - clean uncoated
- Photographs - photo paper
- Pizza delivery boxes - clean
- Shoe boxes
- Shredded paper (*tie in clear plastic bag*)
- Telephone books
- Tissue paper (e.g., gift wrap, dry cleaning)

**PLASTIC** *Empty and rinse food and product container*

- Auto parts - plastic (*no fluids*)
- Baby wipe containers
- Baskets - plastic
- Beverage bottles (e.g., soda, juices, water)
- Bleach and detergent bottles
- Buckets (*remove metal handles*)
- Coat hangers - plastic
- Coffee-cup lids
- Coolers\*
- Crates - plastic
- Disposable razors
- Flower pots - plastic
- Food containers (e.g., cottage cheese, yogurt)
- Furniture\* - plastic (e.g., chairs, tables)
- Gloves - rubber (*not single-use or latex disposable*)
- Hoses (e.g., car, garden, appliance)
- Household cleaner bottles (*non-toxic*)
- Mouthwash
- Pet carriers\*
- Pipe - plastic (*non-PVC*)
- Plastics (*with numbers 1-7*)
- Prescription bottles (*must be empty*)
- Shampoo and conditioner bottles
- Shelving\* - plastic
- Squeezable bottles (e.g., honey, mayo, ketchup)
- Swimming pools\* (e.g., rigid, inflatable)
- Take-out food containers - plastic
- Toys - plastic
- Umbrellas\* - plastic (e.g., patio, beach)

**FILM PLASTICS** *Bundle in a clear plastic bag and knot the top*

- Bread bags
- Bubble wrap
- Cellophane bags (e.g., pasta, salad, cookies)
- Dry cleaning bags
- Frozen food bags or pouches
- Newspaper bags
- Pallet wrap
- Plastic liners (e.g., from food packaging)
- Plastic wraps
- Produce bags
- Shopping bags - plastic
- Shrink wrap

**ELECTRONIC WASTE**

- Appliances - small (e.g., coffee maker, toaster)
- Calculators
- Cameras
- Cell phones
- Computer mice
- Computer tower\* (detach from computer monitor)
- Cords - tied up (e.g., telephone, computer, appliance)
- DVRs, VCRs, DVD players\*
- Fax machines\*
- Inkjet and toner cartridges
- Keyboards
- Microwave\*
- Pagers
- PDAs
- Printers\*
- Radios
- Scanners\*
- Stereos\*
- Telephones

**GARBAGE** Please place all NON-reusable NON-recyclable, NON-compostable and NON-hazardous items in your garbage container.

All items must fit inside the garbage container with the lid closed. Extra items may be set out in a 32-gallon container or 32-gallon bag.

**GLASS**

- Blue glass
- Ceramics
- Cookware - glass (e.g. baking pans, Pyrex TM)
- Dishware - ceramic
- Eye glasses
- Glass art
- Incandescent light bulbs
- Mirrors

**PAPER**

- Aseptic containers (e.g., juice, soup)
- Blueprint paper (*recycle the cover sheet*)
- Carbon paper
- Cardboard - waxed or soiled
- Envelopes - padded, Tyvek
- Ice cream cartons
- Newspaper - dirty (*paint, pet waste or food/grease*)
- Paper cups and plates - coated
- Paper napkins
- Paper towels
- Photographs - Polaroid
- Pizza delivery boxes - soiled (*food, grease*)
- Take-out food containers (e.g., fast food)
- Thermal fax paper
- Tissues (e.g. Kleenex)
- Waxed paper

**PLASTIC**

- Chip Bags
- Credit cards
- Foil beverage pouches
- Gloves - latex (*single-use and disposable*)
- Pipe - PVC
- Rubber bands
- Shoes
- Straws
- Take-out food containers - polystyrene foam
- Tarps\*
- Toothpaste and ointment tubes
- Utensils - plastic (e.g., spoons, forks, knives)
- Webbing/mesh (e.g., from lawn furniture)

**POLYSTYRENE/STYROFOAM**

- Cups and plates
- Egg cartons - molded foam
- Foam packing (e.g., from electronics)
- Meat trays - molded foam
- Packing "peanuts"
- Take-out food containers - polystyrene foam

**FABRICS and TEXTILES**

- Boots
- Burlap\*
- Carpet and rugs\*
- Cotton
- Diapers - cloth or disposable
- Clothing accessories (e.g. belts, purses)
- Down - filled items
- Electric blankets
- Fabrics - clean or soiled with chemicals, oil, or paint
- Leather goods
- Linen
- Pillows
- Polyester
- Rayon
- Rubber
- Shoes
- Stuffed animals
- Vinyl
- Wool

**ELECTRONIC WASTE**

- Audio and video tapes
- CDs and DVDs (e.g., computer, music)
- Speakers

**FOOD SCRAPS**

- Bones
- Bread
- Coffee grounds
- Compostable plastic bags
- Compostable plastics
- Corks
- Dairy products (e.g., cheese)
- Dough
- Eggs
- Filters (e.g., coffee, tea)
- Fish
- Fruits
- Grains (e.g., rice)
- Meat
- Pasta
- Poultry (e.g., chicken, turkey)
- Shellfish
- Tea bags
- Vegetables

**YARD WASTE** *Items may not exceed 3 feet in length or 6 inches in diameter and must fit inside with the lid closed.*

- Ashes (*hot ashes prohibited*)
- Bamboo
- Burlap
- Construction lumber\*\* (*painted, treated*)
- Crates - wood\*\*
- Dirt\*\*
- Food scraps
- Lumber\*\* (*painted, treated*)
- Manure
- Pampas grass
- Pet waste
- Poison oak
- Rocks\*\*
- Soil\*\*
- Tan bark\*\*
- Wood chips\*\*
- Wood wastes\*\*

**YARD WASTE** Please place all yard waste together in your green yard waste container. Items may not exceed 3 feet in length or 6 inches in diameter and must fit inside with the lid closed. Extras may be set out in a 32-gallon container.

- Branches - cut to fit loosely in container
- Cactus
- Christmas trees - (stand/decorations removed)
- Flax
- Flowers
- Grass clippings
- Hay
- Ivy
- Ice plant
- Landscape vegetation
- Leaves
- Lumber (unpainted, untreated)
- Plant trimmings
- Raw fruits and vegetables
- Sawdust
- Shrubs
- Small prunings
- Sod (remove as much soil as possible)
- Stumps - see size limitations above
- Succulents
- Tree trimmings - see size limitations above
- Yucca

**HAZARDOUS WASTE** These items **cannot** go into the garbage, recycling or yard waste cart for collection.

- Auto and brake fluids
- Car batteries
- Cleaning fluids
- Computers\*
- Electronic waste\*\* (except as listed in recyclables)
- Fire extinguishers
- Fluorescent light bulbs (e.g., CFLs, tubes)
- Fuel tanks - with valve on (e.g., helium, propane, gas tanks)
- Grease and cooking oil
- Household Batteries\*\* (e.g., AA, AAA, D, nickel cadmium, lithium)
- Medicines (unused, expired)
- Mercury thermometers and thermostats
- Monitors\*
- Motor oil\*\*
- Oil filters\*\*
- Paints and stains (e.g., oil based and latex)
- Pesticides and fertilizers
- Pool and spa chemicals
- Solvents
- Syringes and sharps
- Televisions\*
- Transmission fluid

For more information, please call the Santa Cruz County Household Hazardous Waste Program at **831.454.2606** or visit [www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org).

\*These items can be collected curbside as Bulky Items, please call Customer Service at **831.768.9505** to schedule a pick-up appointment.

\*\*See information in Extra Services for disposal options through GreenWaste.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

<b>GreenWaste Recovery Customer Care</b>	<b>831.768.9505</b>
Santa Cruz County Household Hazardous Waste Program	831.454.2606
Buena Vista Landfill	831.454.2430
Recycling and Solid Waste Services	831.475.7300

## EXTRA SERVICES

### Annual Clean-up

Each customer can set-out up to 10 additional bags or items for collection during their regular collection day. Max. size 5ft. in length and max. weight 70lbs. No tree stumps, no hazardous waste or construction debris (dirt, concrete, brick, asphalt). Use a clean-up sticker for each item.

### Bulky Item Collection

Furniture, refrigerators or other large items may be picked up at your curb for a small fee per item. To schedule a pick-up appointment, call Customer Service.

### E-Waste

GreenWaste accepts TV's, computers and computer monitors as Bulky Items. Please call Customer Service to schedule a pick-up appointment.

### Extra Garbage

Call Customer Service to arrange for pick up of extra garbage. Extra garbage must be placed in a 32-gallon can or 32-gallon bag. Please call Customer Service prior to your collection day to schedule extra garbage collection.

### Household Batteries

To recycle small batteries, simply seal the batteries in a clear Ziploc bag and place the items on top (not inside) of your recycling cart.

### Used Motor Oil and Motor Oil Filters

To recycle used motor oil and filters at curbside, you must use a FREE GreenWaste issued oil jug because it is designed to prevent leaks. Seal drained oil filters in a sturdy clear plastic bag. Please place filled oil jugs and filter bags on the curb near your containers for collection. Oil mixed with other automotive fluid will not be collected. To order a FREE oil jug, call Customer Service.

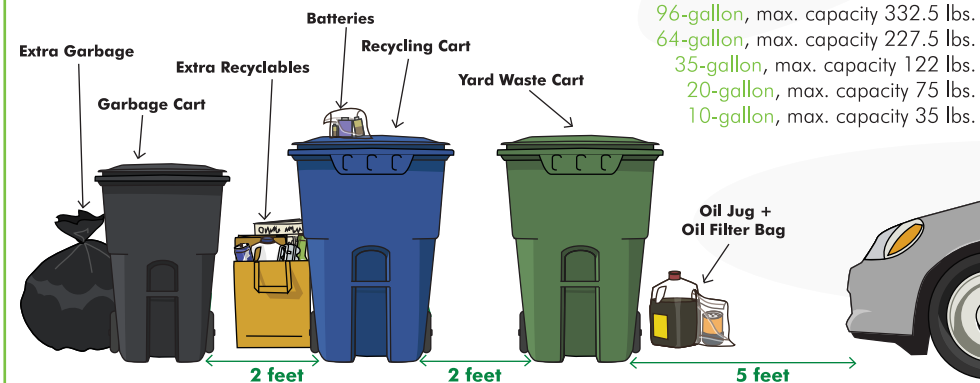
## CART SET-OUT

### Cart Set-Out and Weight Restrictions

Set carts out by 7am on your service day. Cart cannot exceed the weight limit listed below.

#### GreenWaste Container

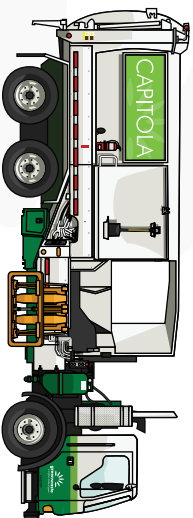
- 96-gallon, max. capacity 332.5 lbs.
- 64-gallon, max. capacity 227.5 lbs.
- 35-gallon, max. capacity 122 lbs.
- 20-gallon, max. capacity 75 lbs.
- 10-gallon, max. capacity 35 lbs.





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# Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide



A close-up photograph of a hand pouring a golden beer into a glass mug. The mug has a metal lid and a handle. The background is blurred, showing a person in a dark shirt. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the liquid and the glass.

# Contents

**03 Introduction**

**04 Terminology**

**07 Buying Guide**

**08 Takeout Containers**

**09 Cold Cups**

**10 Hot Cups**

**11 Straws**

**12 Takout Utensils**

**13 Plates & Bowls**

**14 Sauce Cups/Ramekins & Other Items**

**15 Cost and Benefits**

**18 Creative Ideas to Implement Reusables**



# Introduction

Plastic – it’s all around us! From the tops of mountains to the depths of the ocean, plastic is quite literally everywhere. Researchers estimate that there are now more than 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic in the ocean with 8.75 million metric tons added every year. Plastic pollution on our beaches overwhelmingly comes from products that we only use for a few minutes before they are discarded and make their way into the environment, where they never biodegrade. If we continue down this path of single-use plastic addiction, it is expected that there will be more plastic than fish, by weight, in the ocean [by 2050](#). That’s why our ultimate goal is source reduction as we want to shift away from single-use items and toward a more sustainable future.

While single-use disposables may seem like a cost-effective option for your business, if you take into consideration the environmental costs of production and disposal, the true cost of these items is much higher. These extraneous costs are passed along to someone else and, more often than not, the environment and low-income communities end up paying the ultimate price. This is why the Surfrider Foundation firmly advocates for a reduction in the overall use of single-use plastic items by switching to reusables whenever possible. While upfront costs of reusables are undoubtedly higher than single-use disposables, reusables are always a more cost-friendly option in the long run. The longer you use reusable items, the lower the cost per item becomes. By not having to continually purchase single-use items and pay to haul away the waste, your operating costs will be lowered and you can feel good about the choices you’re making. By making the switch, you are aligning your

business with sustainable choices and you’ll attract a new customer base of conscious consumers who will truly appreciate your commitment to the environment – and reward that commitment with their business.

Navigating the world of plastic alternatives can be difficult. With so many options available and misleading advertising of so called “green” products running rampant, it’s hard to make an informed decision that’s right for your business. That’s why we’ve created this guide to help you better understand what’s on the market today and where we see the biggest areas of concern. We’ll explain the current terminology and provide examples of products ranging from ‘best choice’ to ‘what to avoid.’ While this guide does not put forward all of the available options, we hope it will provide you with a starting point. These same concepts can be applied at your current vendor. This topic is also ever-changing as new materials and systems go on the market. Therefore, we will make updates as needed and announce when new versions are available so you can benefit from the latest advancements in research and technology.

Thank you for being a member of the Surfrider Foundation’s Ocean Friendly Restaurants program! We truly appreciate your commitment to protecting our ocean and beaches by reducing the amount of single-use plastics used in your establishment. If you are not yet a member, you can [sign up now](#) or reach out to your [local chapter](#) for more information. One restaurant, one customer at a time – we are increasing awareness, driving behavior change, and ultimately creating scalable impact to reduce our collective plastic footprint.



# Terminology

Seemingly overnight, the variety of labels for foodware has skyrocketed. While some labels have a vetted verification process to ensure products meet certain standards, others aren't well regulated and don't hold much weight. Words like "eco" or "green" can often be used with no scientific backing at all. This "greenwashing" phenomenon makes it even more difficult to make the right choice. Unfortunately, this can cause a seemingly good intention to be just as destructive as a bad one. As an Ocean Friendly Restaurant, you are already working to protect our ocean and beaches from the threat of single-use plastics. By outlining the below terms, we hope to arm you with the tools to make informed decisions on the foodware products used in your establishment.

## BIOPLASTICS

As stated by the [EPA](#), "Bio-based plastics are manufactured from plant materials instead of being made from oil or natural gas. Because they are plant-based, there is a tendency to assume that this type of plastic must be biodegradable. However, bio-based plastics can be designed to be structurally identical to petroleum-based plastics, and if designed in this way, they can last in the environment for the same period of time as petroleum-based plastic." Bioplastics are usually accompanied with a leaf symbol and may state that they are made from corn, sugar cane or other natural-sounding sources. However, in the case of PLA, these raw materials must undergo an intense and highly polluting chemical process to transform that organic material into what we know as bioplastics. This is in addition to the fertilizers, pesticides, and land needed to grow the crops. There is also no indicator to state what percentage is made from plants. Even the [USDA](#) sets their minimum biobased requirement at just 25%, with the rest of the polymer usually made from or blended with conventional fossil-fuel based plastic. In short, bioplastics as they exist today should be avoided.

## BIODEGRADABLE

[Lexico by Oxford](#) simply defines biodegradable as, "capable of being decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms." However, the practical application of this label is anything but simple. While it does mean that items can be broken down, the label typically hasn't taken into account the timeframe for degradation to occur which could be weeks, months, or longer. It also often doesn't consider if any chemicals would be left over in the environment or released during the processes. Additionally, it doesn't outline the specific conditions required for proper degradation, such as heat, moisture, or oxygen levels. These conditions do not exist in common disposal sites or out in the environment. In fact, bioplastics release methane, a greenhouse gas 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide, if they end up in the landfill. More often than not, biodegradable items don't fully break down, resulting in more microplastic pollution. The term biodegradable is not well-regulated so be wary of companies that tout their products as biodegradable without any certifications or end-of-life instructions.



# Terminology

## COMPOSTABLE

The simplified definition by [Lexico](#) states, “able to be made into compost,” with [compost](#) defined as “decayed organic material used as a plant fertilizer.” Similar to biodegradable products, most compostable products require highly specific environmental conditions, meaning that these items will not simply turn into compost when tossed in a landfill or in our waterways. Compostable plastics can also contaminate recycling infrastructure if disposed of in a recycling bin, causing the entire batch of recyclable waste to be rejected and sent to a landfill. An important distinction to note is whether an item is home compostable or only compostable in a specialized industrial composting facility. If it is the latter, which is usually the case with bioplastic foodware, these facilities can be difficult to come by and jurisdictions often lack the distribution networks needed to get compostable waste from your trash bin to the right facility. Further, some industrial composting facilities are beginning to reject bioplastics because they often don’t break down completely, take a longer time to process, and contain chemicals that can contaminate the compost and reduce its value. While the term compostable is more highly regulated than the term biodegradable, there are still a lot of factors to consider before purchasing compostable plastics.

## GREENWASHING

[Webster’s Dictionary](#) defines greenwashing as, “expressions of environmentalist concerns, especially as a cover for products, policies, or activities.” [CorpWatch](#) expands upon this to include “the phenomena of socially and environmentally destructive corporations, attempting to preserve and expand their markets or power by posing as friends of the environment.” Greenwashing occurs when, either to be intentionally misleading or not, companies label and market products as environmentally friendly in order to capitalize on the growing environmental awareness among consumers, without actually providing an environmental benefit. Consumers feel better about their choices even though those choices may have similar or even worse environmental impacts than their previous choice in product. To add insult to injury, these products are often more expensive than the ones they intend to replace.

## PETROLEUM-BASED PLASTICS

These are your conventional plastics. Cheap, plentiful and highly resistant to biodegradation. While this is a beneficial quality when using the product, it has dangerous end-of-life consequences. Since they are produced from fossil fuels, they are also a major contributor to climate change and should therefore be avoided when purchasing disposable products. To make matters worse, petroleum-based plastics can release toxic chemicals into the food or beverages that you’re serving. Learn more by reading our [blog post](#) titled, “Choose Reusables to Avoid Consuming Chemicals.”

## PFAS

Poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances are a group of man-made chemicals commonly found in food packaging and household products, such as nonstick pans and water-resistant fabrics. According to the [EPA](#), PFAS can accumulate in the body over time, which is why they are also referred to as forever chemicals. They lead to adverse health outcomes including cancer, compromised immune system function, and hormone disruption.



# Terminology

## PHA

Polyhydroxyalkanoate (PHA) is an emerging bio-based plastic more commonly used in agricultural operations but is being made increasingly more available in foodware and medical devices. PHA products are produced through bacteria fermentation, which has less upstream impacts from other bio-based plastics like PLA. PHA products also have a higher heat threshold, which reduces the need for chemical processing or additives. Although it is still an emerging material and more testing needs to be done, PHA shows potential promise to degrade in the natural environment without the need of an industrial composting facility.



## PLA

Poly(lactic acid) (PLA) is a bio-based plastic commonly used in foodware and takeout items and marketed as a sustainable alternative to traditional plastics. However, despite claims of environmental-friendliness, products made from PLA will only reach complete degradation at industrial composting facilities and often contain high 'upstream impacts' from growing the plant-based material and processing it into a plastic product. PLA plastic will not break down into natural elements in your backyard composting pile, the landfill, or most importantly, the ocean.

## POLYSTYRENE

Polystyrene is a type of plastic resin commonly manufactured from non-renewable fossil fuels and synthetic chemicals into two main forms: expanded and rigid. Expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam is commonly referred to as Styrofoam™. EPS foam **does not biodegrade in our lifetimes** and can leach out synthetic chemicals over time, especially when heated. One mandatory Ocean Friendly Restaurant criteria is that no EPS foam is used. Look for the #6 recycling symbol to double check if an item is polystyrene.

**For more details and to learn more about bioplastics, check out Surfrider's [Bioplastic Glossary](#) or Surfrider's [Guidance on Bioplastics](#).**

# Buying Guide

In an ideal world, reusable items would be the only approved foodware option. Convenient systems would be in place to make it easy to use reusables both onsite and on the go. However, we recognize that our society is not quite there yet and understand that it will take small, deliberate changes happening on a large scale to reach that goal. Depending upon where you're located, these changes might look different. That's why we've categorized foodware options as either 'best choice,' 'good alternative,' or items to 'avoid.' We hope this inspires you to find ways to reduce your use of single-use items and make more sustainable choices for your business.

## BEST CHOICE

Reusables! A mandatory criterion for the program is that onsite dining must be served on reusables. This includes cups, plates, sauce containers, and anything else you use to serve your customers. Eating with reusables elevates the food and customer experience while avoiding harmful chemicals and creating less waste. Take it up a notch and expand reusables to your takeout customers. Check out [page 19](#) for creative ways to implement more reusables.

## GOOD ALTERNATIVE

Single-use items made from naturally occurring materials. Paper-based items, bamboo plates, wooden utensils, straws made completely from paper, hay, pasta, seaweed, bamboo and more! That said, beware of plastic-lined paper items, as these are not recyclable or home compostable. Words to look out for include "plant-based lining", "poly-coated paper" and "grease resistant," to name a few. Additionally, a number of paper and fiber-based products have been found to contain toxic PFAS. These forever chemicals are added to make some paper items more grease-resistant but they can leach into the food we eat, contaminate compost, and ultimately end up in our bodies. For this reason, items found to contain PFAS by the Center for Environmental Health are not included in the list below. However, many products have not yet been tested, so express caution when purchasing disposable products.

## AVOID

Plastics and bioplastics. Watch out for greenwashing and terms that do not require certifications. Just because it says "compostable" doesn't mean it will be composted or can be composted at home. Consider the end-of-life of items you're buying for your customers – how will they dispose of it? Don't pass on that responsibility – take it on yourself! Ultimately, these single-use items are still promoting a disposable mindset and should be used sparingly or upon request whenever possible. Words to look out for include "eco-friendly," "bio-based," "degradable," "PLA," "planet-friendly" and "green."

We hope you will use this guide to evaluate the products you're currently using, discover products you may not have considered in the past, and compare costs. While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, remember to consider how long you will use them and calculate the cost savings of switching away from single-use disposable items over time. Check out the cost calculator from ReThink Disposable to estimate your savings and break-even point. Please note that costs may vary depending upon the quantity purchased or whether wholesale pricing options are available in your area. An asterisk (\*) next to a vendor indicates a Surfrider Ocean Friendly vendor where discounts are available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants. Reach out to your local chapter for more information.



# Buying Guide

## TAKEOUT CONTAINERS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Klean Kanteen Reusable Containers</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Klean Kanteen</a>	8oz, 16oz	\$18.95+ Per Box <i>Wholesale Available</i>
● <b>M'porte Reusable Containers</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">M'Porte*</a>	50oz	\$24.00 Per Container <i>Wholesale Available</i>
● <b>EcoLunch Boxes</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">EcoLunch Boxes</a>	Multiple	\$19.99+ Per Box <i>Wholesale Available</i>
● <b>Bagcraft Corrugated Paper Takeout Box</b>	Uncoated Paper	Unbleached Paper, Recyclable When Clean	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	4", 5.5", 8"	\$0.12+ Per Container <i>Wholesale Available</i>
● <b>Foil Takeout Pan</b>	Aluminum Foil	Recyclable When Clean	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	8" round	\$0.11+ Per Container
● <b>Bare by Solo Sugarcane Containers</b>	Bagasse	BPI Certified Compostable in Industrial Facility <i>ASTM D6868</i>	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	6", 8", 9" <i>With or Without Dividers</i>	\$0.11+ Per Container
● <b>Avoid: EPS Foam, Bioplastics, Compostable or Biodegradable Plastics, Polypropylene</b>					

● **Best Choice** ● **Good Alternative** ● **Avoid**

*\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants*

# Buying Guide

## COLD CUPS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Mason Jar with Handle</b>	Glass	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	16oz	\$0.66 Per Jar
● <b>Steel Cups</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Klean Kanteen</a>	10oz, 16oz	\$9.48 Per Cup <i>Wholesale Available</i>
● <b>Steel Cups</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Steelys</a>	Multiple	\$4.29+ Per Pint
● <b>Steel Cups</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">The Stainless Depot</a>	Multiple	\$3.50 Per Pint
● <b>Coconut Cups</b>	Coconut Shells	Reusable	<a href="#">The Coconut King</a>	12oz	\$1.50 Per Cup
● <b>SiliPint</b>	Silicone	Reusable	<a href="#">SiliPint</a>	Multiple	\$9.95 Per Cup <i>Wholesale Available</i>

● There are limited options available on the current market that meet Surfrider’s standards as a good alternative. Until science catches up and options become available, Surfrider cannot provide a recommended good alternative for single-use disposable cold cups. Our recommendation is to implement reusables in creative ways that work for your business.

● **Avoid:** EPS foam, Bio-Based Plastics, Compostable Plastics, Petroleum-Based Plastics

● **Best Choice**   ● **Good Alternative**   ● **Avoid**

*\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants*

# Buying Guide

## HOT CUPS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Enamelware Coffee Mug</b>	Porcelain Enamel Coated Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	12oz, 16oz	\$7.00+ Per Mug
● <b>Glass Coffee Mug</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	Multiple	\$2.50+ Per Mug
● <b>Stoneware Coffee Mug</b>	Stoneware	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	Multiple	\$0.85+ Per Mug
● <b>Melamine Coffee Mug</b>	Melamine	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	Multiple	\$1.40+ Per Mug

● There are limited options available on the current market that meet Surfrider’s standards as a good alternative. Until science catches up and options become available, Surfrider cannot provide a recommended good alternative for single-use disposable cold cups. Our recommendation is to implement reusables in creative ways that work for your business.

● **Avoid:** EPS Foam, Bio-Based Plastics, Compostable Plastics, Petroleum-Based Plastics

● **Best Choice**   ● **Good Alternative**   ● **Avoid**

*\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants*

# Buying Guide

## STRAWS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Glass Straw</b>	Glass	Reusable	<a href="#">Simply Straw*</a>	8" Classic	\$2.13+ Per Straw
● <b>Stainless Steel Straw</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Simply Straw*</a>	8.5" Classic	\$2.13+ Per Straw
● <b>Silicone Straw</b>	Silicone	Reusable	<a href="#">Simply Straw*</a>	9.75" Angled	\$1.54 Per Straw
● <b>Bamboo Straw</b>	Bamboo	USDA Organic, Reusable	<a href="#">Bambu</a>	8" Classic, 5.75" Cocktail, 8.5" Jumbo	\$1.67+ Per Straw
● <b>Stainless Steel Straw</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">SeaStraws*</a>	7.75" Angled	\$0.67+ Per Straw
● <b>Paper Straw</b>	Paper	FSC, SFI Backyard Compostable	<a href="#">SeaStraws*</a>	7.75" Classic, 5.75" Cocktail	\$0.04+ Per Straw
● <b>Paper Straw</b>	Paper	CMA, SFI Backyard Compostable	<a href="#">Aardvark*</a>	0.75" Classic, 7.57" Eco-flex, 5.75" Cocktail 8.5" Jumbo	\$0.04+ Per Straw
● <b>Paper Straw</b>	Paper	Home Compostable	<a href="#">Simply Straw*</a>	8" Classic	\$0.10 Per straw
● <b>Hay Straw</b>	Grain Stalks	Home Compostable	<a href="#">Harvest Straws</a>	One Size	Inquire for pricing
● <b>Hay Straw</b>	Wheat Stems, Plant Stems	Home Compostable	<a href="#">HayStraws!*</a>	Cocktail, Standard, Jumbo	\$0.02, \$0.03, \$0.07 Per Straw
● <b>Pasta Straw</b>	Wheat, Water	Home Compostable	<a href="#">The Amazing Pasta Straw</a>	10" classic	\$0.07 Per Straw
● <b>Seaweed Straw</b>	Seaweed	Home Compostable	<a href="#">Loliware</a>	One size	Inquire for pricing
● <b>Avoid: Plastics, Bioplastics</b>	Don't fall victim to greenwashing – if it looks like a plastic straw, it will most likely act like a plastic straw when discarded.				

● **Best Choice** ● **Good Alternative** ● **Avoid**

\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants

# Buying Guide

## TAKEOUT UTENSILS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Bamboo Utensils</b>	Bamboo	Reusable	<a href="#">Bamboo MN</a>	8"	\$0.48+ Per Utensil
● <b>Stainless Utensils</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	8"	\$0.50+ Per Utensil
● <b>Stainless Chopsticks</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	9"	\$0.41 Per Set
● <b>Bamboo Utensils</b>	Bamboo	Certified Organic, Home Compostable	<a href="#">Bambu</a>	6.5"	\$0.26 Per Utensil
● <b>Wooden Utensils</b>	Birch Wood	FSC-Certified, Home Compostable	<a href="#">Eco-gecko</a>	6.5"	\$0.056 Per Utensil
● <b>Edible Spoons</b>	Wheat Flour, Olive Oil, Salt	Edible or Home Compostable	<a href="#">Bocado</a>	One size	\$0.67+ Per Spoon
● <b>Avoid: Plastics, Bioplastics</b>					

● **Best Choice**   ● **Good Alternative**   ● **Avoid**

*\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants*



# Buying Guide

## PLATES & BOWLS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Coconut Bowls</b>	Coconut Shells	Reusable, Home Compostable	<a href="#">Coconut Bowls</a>	18oz, 24oz	\$9.71+ Per Bowl <i>Wholesale Available</i>
● <b>Bamboo Plates</b>	Bamboo	Certified Organic, Home Compostable	<a href="#">Bambu</a>	5", 7", 9", 11" <i>Square or Round</i>	\$0.66+ Per Plate
● <b>Bamboo Plates</b>	Bamboo	FSC-Certified, Home Compostable	<a href="#">Eco-gecko</a>	7", 9", 11" <i>Square or Round</i>	\$0.60+ Per Plate
● <b>Palm Leaf Plates</b>	Fallen Palm Leaves	Home Compostable	<a href="#">Eco-gecko</a>	Multiple Sizes and Shapes	\$0.25+ Per Plate
● <b>Palm Leaf Bowls</b>	Fallen Palm Leaves	Home Compostable	<a href="#">Eco-gecko</a>	4", 5", 6", 7" <i>Square or Round</i>	\$0.19+ Per Bowl
● <b>Avoid: Plastics, Bioplastics</b>					

● **Best Choice**   ● **Good Alternative**   ● **Avoid**

*\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants*

# Buying Guide

## SAUCE CUPS & RAMEKINS

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>Round Sauce Cup</b>	Stainless Steel	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	1.5oz, 2.5oz, 4oz	\$0.32 Per Cup
● <b>Round Sauce Cup</b>	Melamine	Reusable	<a href="#">Webstaurant Store</a>	2oz, 4oz, 6oz	\$0.33+ Per Cup
● <b>Palm Leaf Sauce Bowl</b>	Palm Leaf	Home Compostable	<a href="#">Eco-gecko</a>	2" Square	\$0.13 Per Cup
● <b>Avoid:</b>	Plastic, Bioplastics				

## OTHER

Item	Material	Certification & Disposal Method	Vendor	Sizes	Cost
● <b>SiliPint Kids Cup with Lid</b>	Silicone	Reusable	<a href="#">Silipint</a>	8oz	\$11.90 Per Cup and Lid <i>wholesale available</i>
● <b>Fiber Lid for Cups</b>	Plant Fiber	Home Compostable	<a href="#">EcoPliant</a>	One size	\$0.085 Per Lid
● <b>Paper Food Tray</b>	Paper with Clay Coating	BPI Certified, Compostable in Industrial Facility	<a href="#">Eco-Products</a>	1lb, 2lb, 3lb, 5lb	\$0.12+ Per Tray

● **Best Choice**   ● **Good Alternative**   ● **Avoid**

*\* Discounts available for current Ocean Friendly Restaurants*



# Cost And Benefits

As great as it is to support sustainability, we understand that you have a bottom line to consider. The cost of products is a huge factor in determining what you can purchase for your business. However, the true cost of a product over time can be difficult to factor in. Some of the considerations include: lifespan, recurring costs, payback period, end-of-life disposal, production process and more. We hope you will consider this wide array of factors when deciding what foodware options fit your business.

## BREAKEVEN POINT\*

This is the point at which a reusable product exceeds the value of purchasing disposable products, thus recovering your initial investment and saving your business money. To calculate this, find the cost of the reusable item and divide it by the cost of the single-use item. The answer is how many uses it will take to recover your investment and begin to see cost savings.

## EXAMPLE:

$$\frac{\text{Disposable straw} = \$0.04}{\text{Reusable straw} = \$0.69} = \text{Breakeven point} = 16.74 \text{ uses}$$

In this example, after only 17 uses of your reusable straw, you would start to save money and truly reap the benefits of transitioning from single-use to reusables.

*\*The breakeven point is an estimate that does not take into account external added costs associated with reusables. These costs will vary and we encourage you to consider all factors when switching to reusables. For a more in-depth look at costs, try the Cost Benefit Calculator from ReThink Disposable.*

## COST BENEFIT CALCULATOR

Want to know how much money you can save each year by switching to reusable foodware at your business? ReThink Disposable's Foodware Calculator can help you estimate:

- Annual net cost savings from replacing single-use foodware to reusable alternatives
- Cost of reusable items
- Current annual usage
- Payback period

Use their worksheets and helpful guide in the following pages or find the online cost benefit calculator at: [rethinkdisposable.org/dev/foodware-calculator](https://rethinkdisposable.org/dev/foodware-calculator)



# Worksheet #1

Estimate your current annual usage and projected annual cost for a specific disposable product. Estimate the percent reduction in disposable product and projected annual impact of switching from the disposable product.

1. Enter the name of the disposable item you are considering replacing.
2. Enter the case quantity of the item.
3. Enter the cost per case of the item.
4. Enter the estimated number of cases you purchase per year.
5. Enter the unit cost (Column 3 ÷ Column 2).
6. Enter the projected annual usage (Column 2 x Column 4).
7. Enter the projected annual cost (Column 6 x Column 5).
8. Enter the estimated % reduction of disposable product when you implement the reusable option.
9. Enter the projected annual usage after reusable products are implemented (Column 6 - (Column 6 x Column 8)).
10. Enter the estimate annual cost of disposables after reusable products are implemented (Column 9 x Column 5).

## FILL IN THE TABLE TO ESTIMATE YOUR PROJECTED ANNUAL IMPACT OF SWITCHING TO DISPOSABLES

Item	Case Quantity	Case Cost	Estimated Cases Used Per Year	Unit Cost	Projected Annual Usage	Projected Annual Cost	Estimated % Reduction of Disposable Product	Projected Annual Usage After Resuable Products Are Implemented	Estimated Annual Cost of Disposables
Cups	1,000	\$50.00	24	\$0.05	24,000	\$1,200	50%	12,000	\$600



# Worksheet #2

Do a cost-benefit analysis and estimate the payback period of switching from a disposable product to a reusable one. This worksheet will help you understand the cost of implementation and any annual cost savings.

## 1. Impact of Disposables Reduction

- a. Enter the projected annual quantity reduction (Worksheet 1 Column 9 - Worksheet 1 Column 6).
- b. Enter the projected annual cost impact (Worksheet 1 Column 10 - Worksheet 1 Column 7).
- c. Transfer the estimated perfect reduction from Worksheet 1 Column 8.

## 2. Costs of Reusables

- a. Input your set-up costs, including, cost of the reusable product and costs of any new equipment and infrastructure.
- b. Input any annual on-going costs, including, any labor costs, ongoing purchases (dish soap, sponges, replacements due to loss or breakage, and anticipated increase in regular bills).
- c. Input any ongoing savings as as negative here, such as, reductions in your waste hauling fees.

## 3. Cost-Benefit Analysis

- a. Calculate the payback period for any set-up costs (Column -2a ÷ Column 1b) x 12 months.
- b. Calculate your annual cost savings after payback period (Column 1b + Column 2b + 2c). This number takes into account your annual on-going costs from 2b.

Item	IMPACT OF DISPOSABLES REDUCTION			COSTS OF REUSABLES			COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS	
	(1A) Annual Quantity	(1B) Annual Cost	(1C) Percentage Change	(2A) Set-up Costs	(2B) Annual Ongoing Costs	(2C) Annual Ongoing Savings	(3A) Payback Period	(3B) Annual Cost Impact After Payback Period
Cups	-12,000	-\$600.00	-50%	\$100.00	\$125.00	-\$180.00	2	-\$655.00



# Interpreting Your Results

Your results are divided into three categories:

- Impact of your disposables reduction
- Cost of new reusable
- Savings or cost of making the switch

In the example above, a restaurant reduced its disposable cup usage by 50% (Column 1c) by providing reusable cups. Their **quantity reduction** (Column 1a) is negative because this is how many disposable cups they did NOT buy. They bought 50% less and they also had a negative **annual cost** (Column 1b) of -\$600.00. They had a set-up cost of \$100.00 (Column 2a) which reflect the purchase of reusable cups. **Annual ongoing costs** (Column 2b) were \$125.00 in this example, which includes items like sponges, soap, labor, and replacements for loss or breakage. **Annual ongoing savings** (Column 2c) will be entered as a negative, reflecting any savings on waste, energy and water bills. In the example above, the savings equaled -\$180.00 annually.

The **Cost-Benefit Analysis** area of the table reflects a two-month **payback period** (Column 3a) which is the period of time required to pay back the “**set-up costs**” before the restaurant owner begins to accrue savings. The **annual cost impact after payback period**

(Column 3b) is negative, because it reflects a savings of \$655.00 per year.

When you interpret your own results, be aware that if you do not receive a negative figure in the annual savings area, it indicates that your **annual ongoing costs** outweigh the cost savings reaped through the reduction of disposables.

These worksheets can help you compare the cost of using specific reusable foodware to the cost of a specific disposable product. Depending on your implementation plan, there may be other cost-related factors to consider.

ReThink Disposable helps businesses save money and reduce waste by switching to reusable foodware for dine-in. If you would like to learn more about how you can eliminate single-use foodware products, please visit [rethinkdisposable.org](http://rethinkdisposable.org). If your business is located in the San Francisco Bay Area you may be eligible for free technical assistance and a mini-grant to support your efforts. For more information please contact Clean Water Action’s ReThink Disposable program at [rethinkdisposable@cleanwater.org](mailto:rethinkdisposable@cleanwater.org) or call 415.369.9160.



# Creative Ideas To Implement Reusables

It can be challenging to shift away from single-use altogether. A culture of convenience has all but demanded the availability of single-use takeout items. But with a little creative thinking, you can make more reusable items available for takeout. Check out some of our favorite ways to offer reusables for your customers!

## BYO DISCOUNT

Sometimes the simplest ideas can have the greatest impacts. Offering a discount to customers who bring their own reusables will incentivize them to return to your establishment (with their reusables!) time and time again. There are many variations to a BYO discount. You may choose to offer either a percentage or a set amount off their purchase, a free topping or customization, or a stamp on a loyalty card that builds toward a bigger reward. The options are endless and we encourage you to find something that works for your business.

## TAKEOUT LIBRARY

One of our favorite ideas to increase the availability of reusables while building a sense of community is to install a takeout library. This can include mugs, mason jars, miscellaneous containers, and more. The items for the library are often thrifted or donated, which can keep costs down for your business. The idea is simple: take an item, leave an item. Customers can simply opt in to using one of the available items for their order and leave with it. If they are a regular or local customer, they will drop it back off or bring in any items they may have at home to donate. While this does largely rely on the generosity of customers, it often builds a loyal group of people and a strong sense of community. While unconventional, the success of implementing a takeout library may surprise you.

## SELLING BRANDED MATERIALS

Having reusable products for sale can help ease your customers in their transition to reusables while marketing your brand as an environmentally-conscious business. Offer to sanitize new purchases so your customers can use them right away or give a discount on their total if they purchased a reusable item with their meal. Consumers love to align themselves with their favorite businesses and, if you're selling quality items, they will use their reusables outside of your business, further spreading the word that your company cares.

## BUILD THE COST INTO THE PRICE

We understand that no one wants to raise prices but upping the cost of your goods so they are served in reusable containers might just pay off. Studies have shown that consumers are willing to pay more for things they view as sustainable, with [one](#) concluding that 35% of consumers are willing to pay 25% more than the original price if they felt it was a sustainable choice. The environment has been increasingly on everyone's mind and plastic pollution awareness has recently reached an all-time high. Your dedication to reducing single-use plastics will build a loyal customer base that generally won't mind paying a little more to feel better about their choices.



## REUSABLE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM OR RENTALS

Similar to a takeout library, this incorporates a similar idea but in order to use the item, customers must be part of an existing member program or provide a rental deposit. The deposit helps to cover your costs as well as instill a sense of responsibility with the customer – if they lose or damage the container, they lose the deposit. It's up to you to decide how this program would work best in your restaurant, but the possibilities are endless. You just need to keep a certain amount of reusable takeout containers on hand for the members or renters to use and each customer would return the container to collect their deposit. A member program may include a card or token to be collected and returned to the customer when they return their container. Members of your reusable takeout program will keep coming back and relish being a part of your exclusive sustainability program.

## DON'T PROVIDE TO-GO FOODWARE

While this might sound a bit drastic, especially in the age of takeout, simply not providing to-go containers is a refreshing practice taken right out of history. To-go items were not always viewed as a necessity and we firmly believe that not providing these items is crucial in the shift away from single-use items and toward a more sustainable future. Imagine a slower paced lifestyle, where you stop for a coffee and actually sit down to enjoy it. If you're in a hurry, you simply bring your own container. This option is a culture shift brought to reality. It encourages a pause in the hectic lives of consumers and truly fosters a sense of community among customers who enjoy the simpler things in life. This option is the most cost-effective and easy to implement: start spreading the word and enjoy your dramatic reduction in single-use plastics!

## REUSABLE RETURN PROGRAMS

If the idea of starting your own reusable takeout program seems daunting, don't fret! Reusable-return programs are starting to pop up across the county. They can be structured differently but the general idea is simple: your restaurant joins the program, they take care of the rest! This includes providing you with takeout containers and organizing the collection, sanitation, and return of the containers. With reusable-return programs, these companies often take on most of the responsibility and make it easy to provide your customers with reusable takeout choices. An example of an exciting start-up is [Dispatch Goods](#). We encourage you to check if there are any in your area. One thing to keep an eye out for - make sure their containers are not plastic. While consumers may be able to reuse them for the foreseeable future, these plastic containers will eventually break up into smaller pieces and contribute to the growing issue of plastic pollution.







# COVID-19 PANDEMIC PRECAUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS For Reusable Food Service Ware

## TLDR? Here's the bottom line.



The CDC has confirmed no cases from surface contact and does not suggest that disposable items are safer than reusables.



Using sanitized reusable foodware for orders instead of disposables can save a restaurant on average \$3,000 – \$7,000 annually, while also preventing harm to the environment.



## Restaurant Reopening

This guide specifically addresses what you need to know regarding the safety of reusable foodware. The CDC, FDA, OSHA, and state and local authorities have issued guidelines for safety during the COVID-19 pandemic for re-opening restaurants following the end of Shelter in Place orders. These guidelines detail best practices for the following:

- Social distancing (staff and customers)
- Systems to reduce contact and cross contamination
- Hand washing
- Disinfecting surfaces
- Face coverings

The CDC's [guide](#) for how to incorporate these into your business practices should be followed, however, their considerations are meant to supplement — not replace — any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety regulations. **Practices should be implemented based on what is practical and acceptable to each community.**



*Your guests (even the illustrated ones) are excited to dine out again. Elevate their experience with safe, sanitary, and money-saving reusable service ware.*

## Safety of Reusables

According to the CDC, COVID-19 is mainly spread through respiratory droplets from talking, coughing, or sneezing when people are in close proximity. While surface contact is low risk, health experts still suggest that you should avoid touching your face after touching any potentially contaminated surface and that washing and sanitizing surfaces and hands reduces this risk further.

***The CDC has confirmed no cases from surface contact and does not suggest that disposable items are safer than reusables.***

The CDC has confirmed no cases from surface contact and does not suggest that disposable items are safer than reusables. It is important to note that just because single-use foodware items have not been previously used, they still may have been exposed to COVID-19, may not be sanitary, and cannot be washed and sanitized. The supply chain following disposable products is often harder to track than the path of a reusable from the sanitizing machine/dishwasher to the consumer. Properly cleaning, sanitizing, and handling reusable foodware items allows you to best control potential exposure.

## Standard Operating Regulations/Procedures

Restaurants are already required to follow strict health and safety regulations, including safety codes for washing and sanitizing food service items. The CDC's considerations for COVID-19 include additional resources for cleaning and sanitizing hands and surfaces — including reusable foodware items — with [EPA-approved disinfectant products](#). The FDA's [best practices](#) also state that hot water can be used in place of chemicals to sanitize equipment and utensils in manual ware-washing machines and recommend verifying that your ware-washing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and with the appropriate detergents and sanitizers. **The FDA does not suggest that single-use disposables are safer than reusables.**

## To-Go & Pick-Up Orders

Social distancing is still the best way to stop the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, drive-through, delivery, curbside pick-up, and take-out are currently the best practices to prevent transmission of the novel coronavirus. This means that many restaurants will need to use a huge amount of take-out containers. Disposable foodware for take-out is not only harmful to the environment but also very costly to restaurant owners (see Appendix B). While a few pilot programs that supply, collect, and sanitize reusable take-out containers (see Appendix A) for restaurants have launched across the country, most take-out orders still rely on single-use disposable products.

For restaurants relying on to-go orders, you can save money and prevent waste by only providing accessory or additional single-use disposables **by request**, or by training your staff to ask before including accessory disposables with orders (i.e., plastic utensils, straws, napkins, condiment packages, etc.).



*To-Go drinks and drink mixes at Shakedown in Oakland, CA*

Use touchless payment options as much as possible. This is also an opportunity to ask before printing receipts to prevent contact and prevent unnecessary waste.

Some restaurants have implemented reusable systems for their take-out. Some systems expect the customer to either recycle the container or reuse in their own homes. Other systems include an additional deposit fee for the drink/meal in the reusable container. The guest receives the deposit back when the reusable container is returned. Although the upfront cost of purchasing reusable containers may be more expensive than a single-use item, it's beneficial in that it:

- Elevates the dining experience
- Reduces waste generation
- Encourages guests to return as loyal regulars or because they need to return the reusable item to the restaurant

*In some areas, grants are available for the purchase of reusable foodware through Clean Water Fund's ReThink Disposable Program. For inquiries or for technical assistance to transition to circular re-use food service ware, contact [rethinkdisposable@cleanwater.org](mailto:rethinkdisposable@cleanwater.org).*

## **Dine-In Customers**

**Using sanitized reusable foodware for orders instead of disposables can save a restaurant on average \$3,000 – \$7,000 annually**, while also preventing harm to the environment. As the CDC's guidelines demonstrate, there are completely safe practices for using reusable foodware. With small businesses struggling to stay open because of the COVID-19 pandemic, business owners can use these waste prevention practices to help their bottom line.

Replacing individually wrapped items like condiments, sweeteners, and seasonings with bulk items is also a great way to save money and prevent waste, but this also exposes these items to a lot of contact. For now, COVID-19 precautions prevent this from being an option. To avoid bulk self-serve stations, condiments can be given out upon request from a storage area of limited contact, or staff can add condiments to orders (such as pouring milk for customers) to avoid multiple people touching a container.

Shared items like menus may also be a concern. If possible, make sure they can be sanitized between uses. If this is not possible, instead of using disposable paper menus, you can encourage your customers to use digital menus or order ahead of time for contactless ordering.

- ▶ *Replace disposable foodware with reusable foodware for on-site dining (i.e., plates, bowls, trays, cups, mugs, cutlery, etc.)*
- ▶ *Eliminate accessory disposable items or make them available upon request only (i.e., straws, stirrers, food wrap, etc.)*
- ▶ *Always ask if a meal is “for here” or “to go”. If it’s “for here”, prioritize reusable foodware for the order*
- ▶ *Educate staff on the new reuse-centric policies and practices*
- ▶ *Display signage indicating changes made and customer options*

## Personal Bags and Cups

Charging for disposable cups or offering and advertising an incentive (such as a discount) for customers to bring their own (BYO) reusable cup, container, or bag is an effective way to save money and avoid single-use items. Based on a Clean Water Fund [survey](#) of 95 café owners in the eleven districts in San Francisco and 461 customers in the eleven districts of San Francisco, the most fair and appropriate charge that would motivate customers to BYO was between \$0.10 and \$0.25 per cup. These practices are still possible during the COVID-19 pandemic as long as businesses employ systems in which there is no contact between the reusable item and retail surface areas or employees. The CDC has confirmed no cases from surface contact, but this is a precautionary measure to protect workers.

## Sample COVID-19 Reuse Systems

### Sanitation Station:

A sanitation station pictured below is used at a zero-waste cafe in Oakland, CA: [MudLab](#). Customers are able to BYO Mudlab glass jars (*right*) that come with a lid and washable/reusable sleeve. The sanitation station is set up at the front entrance for customers to sanitize and rinse their BYO cup. Instead of folks bringing in their reusables for immediate use, they drop reusables in a collection station where MudLab employees or a third party dishwashing service (depending on the day) will then process/sanitize them for future use. Guests leave the cafe with a reusable jar that has already been sanitized.



### Third Party Dishwashing:

For some cities and states, third party dishwashing is necessary as the COVID-19 Pandemic continues. One way to coordinate this is to have a collection box/station outside of the establishment, and in this way, staff are protected from touching reusables until they have been professionally sanitized. Staff should always wear gloves and masks to touch reusables.

Some Third-Party Dishwashing services include:

Dispatch Goods: <https://dispatchgoods.com/home>

Dishcraft: <https://dishcraft.com/>

SudBusters: <https://sudbusters.com/>

Vessel: <https://vesselworks.org/>

### In-Store Sanitation Model:

This system requires more logistics, however it keeps long-term costs down and helps create loyal regular (and returning) customers. Staff are protected from touching reusables until they have been professionally sanitized.



*In-store sanitation stations for those cities which allow customers to sanitize their own jars*



# Customer Training

## Signage:

- Signage at several locations in the store are necessary to help customers understand the new system
- Signage can be translated into several **languages**
- Signage should include **graphics** depicting the system
- Signage should seek to **gently remind** customers of the negative effects of single-use plastics on the environment
- Signage can remind customers of downstream impacts of single-use plastics

## Reminders:

- Reminders about returnable foodware systems (before ordering, during an order and before leaving) can help customers internalize the new system
- Reminders to bring back their jars should be friendly, patient, and kind

## Incentive Systems:

- Discount for bringing a reusable (staff trained to remember EVERY time)
- Small charge for using a single-use disposable cup
- “Pay it Forward System” rewards people who bring reusables with free drinks or other incentives — folks just buy drinks for the next person in line

## Collection and Reuse of Jars:

Cafes can benefit from the "return-a-jar systems" of companies such as [Straus Milk](#). They not only redeem value when they return jars, but they also position themselves as low-waste to their customers and community. Additional benefits include reduced cost of trash removal from the business. Trash hauling is expensive and milk containers are bulky!



*Straus Milk Jars ready for return (sanitized and returned to store for deposit) from MudLab.*

## APPENDIX A: Helpful Links

[FoodWare Calculator](#): Use this link to determine the cost of your disposables.

[Cost Benefit Calculation of Disposable vs Reusable](#)

### Health Expert Statement Addressing Safety of Reusables and COVID-19:

<https://www.upstreamsolutions.org/blogs/reuse-safety>

### CDC Guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf#page=53>

### FDA Best Practices:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-updelivery-services-during-covid-19>

### Grants For Transitioning To Reusables

Use Reusables: <http://useresposables.org/>

ReThink Disposable: <http://www.rethinkdisposable.org/>

### Helpful Websites For Plastic Reduction

How to Start a Jar Library: <http://iquitplastics.com/blog/how-to-start-a-mug-library>

How to Go Plastic Free: <https://myplasticfreelife.com/plasticfreeguide/>

Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide (Surfrider): <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V14s9afy3M-9a8VT8EjCXypIClyjLOsj/view?ts=5f20b505>



*As you re-open, Clean Water Action/Fund is here to help you thrive. Feel free to reach out to our [ReThink Disposable Business and Zero Waste Specialists](#) at [rethinkdisposable@cleanwater.org](mailto:rethinkdisposable@cleanwater.org) for sustainable foodware recommendations.*



## SOURCES:

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<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Environmental-Health/Food-Program/Coronavirus-Guidance-for-Food-Facilities/>

<https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-international-stateless/2020/06/26618dd6-health-expert-statement-reusables-safety.pdf>

<https://www.surfrider.org/coastal-blog/entry/how-to-reopen-restaurants-while-safely-using-reusables>



*The “New Normal”: Outdoor, socially distanced seating with masks (and reusables!)*

# APPENDIX B: ReThink Disposable Resources

## CLEAN WATER ACTION FACT SHEET

# Business Cost Impacts from disposable food service items

The cost breakdown\* of disposable food service ware items used for typical to-go meals, based on case studies of *ReThink Disposable* certified food businesses

Café Coffee To-Go meal packaging:	
ITEM	COST
16 oz. Hot Cup	\$0.06
Hot Cup Lid	\$0.04
Sleeve	\$0.03
Lid plug/stirrer	\$0.03
3 Sugar Packets	\$0.03
2 Creamers	\$0.08
<b>TOTAL COST: \$0.27</b>	

Taqueria Meal To-Go meal packaging:	
ITEM	COST
Plastic Bag	\$0.01
Foil	\$0.02
Paper Bag for chips	\$0.02
3 Plastic Sauce Cups for salsa	\$0.06
3 Plastic Sauce Cup Lid	\$0.06
6 Napkins	\$0.01
16 oz. Cold Cup	\$0.05
Cold Cup Lid	\$0.01
Straw	\$0.01
<b>TOTAL COST: \$0.25</b>	

Chinese Food To-Go meal packaging:	
ITEM	COST
Plastic Bag	\$0.01
2 Paper Boxes	\$0.25
2 Large Plastic Clamshells	\$0.38
4 Condiment Packets	\$0.10
6 Napkins	\$0.01
Wooden Chopsticks	\$0.03
Plastic Fork, Knife, Spoon	\$0.03
Sauce Cup	\$0.02
Sauce Cup Lid	\$0.02
<b>TOTAL COST: \$0.85</b>	

Hamburger/Fries To-Go meal packaging:	
ITEM	COST
Plastic/Paper Bag	\$0.01
6 Napkins	\$0.01
5 Condiment Packets	\$0.13
8x8x3 Fiber Clamshell for Hamburger	\$0.23
6x6x3 Fiber Clamshell for Fries	\$0.13
16 oz. Cold Cup	\$0.05
Cold Cup Lid	\$0.01
Straws	\$0.01
<b>TOTAL COST: \$0.58</b>	

Greek Food Meal To-Go meal packaging:	
ITEM	COST
Plastic Bag	\$0.01
6x6x3 Fiber Clamshell	\$0.13
Large Plastic Clamshell	\$0.19
Small Plastic Clamshell	\$0.10
3 Sauce Cups	\$0.06
3 Sauce Cup Lids	\$0.06
6 Napkins	\$0.01
Foil	\$0.02
Food Wrap	\$0.01
16 oz. Cold Cup	\$0.05
Cold Cup Lid	\$0.01
Straw	\$0.01
Fork, Knife, Spoon Packet	\$0.03
<b>TOTAL COST: \$0.69</b>	



\*Costs of individual items rounded to the nearest whole cent.



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## CLEAN WATER ACTION FACT SHEET

# Net Cost Impact\* of switching from disposable to reusable food ware items for dine-in

Numbers are based on case studies of *ReThink Disposable* certified food businesses.

### J&J Hawaiian invested \$557 to replace:

- Disposable Paper Food Clamshells with Reusable Plates & Bowls
- Disposable Paper Food Trays with Reusable Baskets
- Disposable Plastic Utensils with Silverware
- Disposable Wooden Chopsticks with Reusable Plastic Chopsticks
- Disposable Plastic Water & Paper Soda Cups with Reusable Glasses
- Disposable Plastic Sauce Cups & Lids with Reusable Sauce Cups

**ANNUAL NET  
COST SAVINGS:  
\$20,517**



### Kirk's Steakburgers invested \$220 to replace:

- Disposable Paper Trays with Reusable Baskets
- Disposable Paper Soda Cups with Reusable Cups
- Disposable Plastic Water Cups with Reusable Cups

**ANNUAL NET  
COST SAVINGS:  
\$3,981**



### New York Pizza invested \$170 to replace:

- Disposable Paper Plates with Reusable Metal Pizza Trays
- Disposable Plastic Utensils with Reusable Silverware
- Disposable Plastic Water Cups with Reusable Glasses

**ANNUAL NET  
COST SAVINGS:  
\$3,043**

### Rene Rose invested \$636 to replace:

- Disposable Plastic Plates with Reusable Plates
- Disposable Plastic Bowls with Reusable Bowls
- Disposable Plastic Sauce Cups & Lids with Reusable Sauce Cups
- Disposable Plastic Water Cups with Reusable Glasses

**ANNUAL NET  
COST SAVINGS:  
\$22,122**



### Shish Grill invested \$80 to replace:

- Disposable Foam Cups for soda and water with Reusable Glasses
- Disposable Plastic Sauce Cups with Reusable Sauce Cups

**ANNUAL NET  
COST SAVINGS:  
\$974**

*\*Net Cost Impact takes into account any upfront and ongoing costs associated with the purchase and care of reusable items and capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable's recommendations. Net cost savings are based on avoided disposable foodware purchases.*

*NOTE: With the exception of Kirk's Steakburgers, the above restaurants had no mechanized dishwashing.*

*This guide was created through a collaboration  
between Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund, Mudlab, and  
UC Berkeley Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management.*



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*ReThink Disposable* is a program of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund conducted in partnership with local businesses and government agencies. Generous support is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: [www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org).