



# LOW WASTE EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

## Low Waste - What Does It Mean?

- Plan activities that create little or no waste
- Use reusable items, such as dishes and linens
- Favor durable, long lasting items; avoid trinkets
- Use bulk containers; avoid single serving packets and containers
- Avoid excessive quantities of food; plan for handling leftovers
- Use recyclable and compostable items



*Building block activity at Celebrate Mansfield Festival*

## Before the event

### VOLUNTEERS

- Work with organizers to identify areas where you can reduce or eliminate waste
- Recruit volunteers to help with waste stations and clean up
- Train volunteers on what to recycle and compost - training is available through the Town

### ADVERTISING

- Publicize your event as low waste
- Use electronic media and electronic invitations, registration
- Use flyers sparingly; place only in high traffic locations
- Design signs that are timeless so that they can be reused at your next event

### DECORATIONS AND HANDOUTS

- Avoid mass distribution of printed agendas and handouts
- Print double-sided
- Avoid lamination (because it cannot be recycled), unless you plan to use the publication for a long period of time
- Use decorations that can be reused. Most plastic decorations CANNOT be recycled.
- Replace balloons with bubbles, paper lanterns or streamers, cloth banners or flags, floating flowers. Birds, turtles and other animals commonly mistake released balloons for food. In place of water balloons use wet sponges.
- Rethink giveaways; avoid disposable trinkets which quickly become trash

## Before the event

### CATERING

- Determine all food and serving products you will need
- Seek caterers that use local, seasonal, and organic food
- Forecast the head count to avoid wasted food by using RSVPs or registration
- Contact the Mansfield food rescue coordinator (860.429.3333) prior to your event to make arrangements for pickup of leftovers. If there are no leftovers, the arrangement can be easily canceled.
- Tell the caterer that you do not want any single-serve packets - they are not recyclable or compostable
- Use washable, durable dinnerware, pitchers, cups, flatware, and linens

### LOCATION and CUSTODIAL SERVICE

- If the event is not catered, do you have access to a dishwasher that will allow reusable dinnerware?
- Check the waste containers at the venue to decide what you need for recycling and composting containers. Recycle and compost containers should always be placed next to waste containers.
- What is the protocol for cleaning up after the event? All municipal buildings have exterior trash and recycle containers. Food scraps can be brought to the Mansfield Transfer Station leaf pile for composting. Determine who will be responsible for composting at the end of the event.

## During the event

- Set up waste containers with recycling and composting containers grouped together
- Provide clear signage to post on or above containers. Taping actual objects to the signs or containers can be very helpful
- Check-in with caterer or food vendors. Provide them with signage for the table or booth.
- Staff the waste stations to ensure that recycle and compost is properly sorted
- Make an announcement about event composting/recycling

## Resources Available

- Foldable trash, compost, and recycling containers and bags
- Recycle/Compost/Trash canopies
- Banners for waste stations
- Step-by-step guidance from the Recycling Coordinator
- A presentation to your organization

*Having volunteers staff the waste stations can help event attendees to properly sort their waste into composting, recycling, and trash receptacles.*



# Mansfield Low Waste Events: Composting FAQs

## What Can and Cannot Be Composted (at the Transfer Station)

### What CAN be composted?

- Food scraps (including grains, breads, dairy, fruits, vegetables, tea bags, coffee grinds, and small amounts of meat)
- napkins & paper towels
- compostable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils as long as they are BPI-certified products ([www.bpiworld.org](http://www.bpiworld.org))
- wooden coffee stirrers
- paper tea bags (staples are ok) and coffee grinds

### What CANNOT be composted?

- ALL plastics, even if they are labelled as “compostable” or “biodegradable”\*
- metal
- coffee lids
- sugar packets (these are lined with plastic coating)
- ketchup or similar dressing and sauce packets (they are made from plastic)
- Styrofoam® cups
- plastic bags
- foil or plastic bags that individually wrapped tea bags come in
- tea bags that are plastic

## The Composting Process

### Where does the compost go?

The Mansfield Transfer Station leaf compost pile, 221 Warrenton Road, Mansfield Center, CT 06250. For hours visit [www.mansfieldct.gov/transfer-station](http://www.mansfieldct.gov/transfer-station).

### \*Why don't we allow compostable plastics?

Sadly, many “compostable” or “biodegradable” plastics do not compost well or they need the high heat of a commercial compost facility in order to turn to soil. The Transfer Station leaf compost pile, although large, is not managed as a commercial compost facility and therefore does not meet the high heat needs of compostable plastics. Currently there are no commercial facilities near Mansfield.

**To borrow materials and receive training,  
contact the Mansfield Recycling Coordinator:  
860.429.3333**

**For guidance on how to incorporate safe food  
handling into a low waste event,  
contact the Eastern Highland Health District:  
860.429.3325**

# Your Recycle Cart: What's In, What's Out

MATERIAL TYPE	INCLUDES/EXAMPLES	DOES NOT INCLUDE
PAPER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspaper</li> <li>• Office paper</li> <li>• Junk mail</li> <li>• Magazines</li> <li>• Paper packing material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper plates</li> <li>• Paper coffee cups</li> <li>• Individual condiment packets</li> <li>• Napkins</li> <li>• Paper towels</li> <li>• Shredded paper</li> <li>• Envelopes padded with bubble</li> </ul>
CARDBOARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corrugated cardboard</li> <li>• Paperboard like a cereal box</li> <li>• Paper towel tubes</li> <li>• Pizza boxes</li> <li>• Cardboard laundry detergent box</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Styrofoam® packing material</li> <li>• Air pillows &amp; bubble wrap</li> <li>• Plastic liners</li> <li>• Slices of pizza</li> <li>• Frozen food containers</li> </ul>
METAL FOOD & BEVERAGE CONTAINERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pet food cans</li> <li>• Soup cans</li> <li>• Aluminum foil &amp; trays</li> <li>• Soda cans</li> <li>• Metal lids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metal lined cardboard, like a Pringles® container</li> <li>• Metal foil top on yogurt container</li> </ul>
PLASTIC CONTAINERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic laundry detergent bottles</li> <li>• Milk jugs</li> <li>• Shampoo bottles</li> <li>• Yogurt containers</li> <li>• Plastic solo cups</li> <li>• Beverage bottles</li> <li>• Plastic lids <i>on</i> the container</li> <li>• Take-out containers <i>other than Styrofoam®</i></li> <li>• Plastic berry boxes</li> <li>• Condiment bottles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Styrofoam® products</li> <li>• Plastic cutlery</li> <li>• Plastic food pouches</li> <li>• Toothpaste tubes</li> <li>• Toothbrushes</li> <li>• Plastic bags</li> <li>• Plastic lids <i>off</i> the container</li> <li>• Individual condiment packets</li> <li>• Prescription bottles</li> <li>• Plastic straws</li> <li>• Plastic air pillows</li> <li>• Plastic wrappers of any kind</li> </ul>
GLASS FOOD & BEVERAGE CONTAINERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wine &amp; beer bottles</li> <li>• Salsa jars</li> <li>• Sauce jars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corks</li> <li>• Ceramic mugs &amp; dishes</li> <li>• Drinking glasses</li> <li>• Perfume bottles</li> </ul>
CARTONS & DRINK BOXES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk cartons</li> <li>• Orange juice cartons</li> <li>• Broth cartons</li> <li>• Almond milk cartons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juice pouches</li> <li>• Vegetable pouches</li> <li>• Tuna fish pouches</li> <li>• Plastic straws</li> </ul>