

CANTEEN/CATERING WASTE

Canteen/Catering Waste

Canteen and catering waste can be defined as all waste food, which includes used cooking oil that is produced in restaurants, catering facilities and kitchens which prepare food for human consumption. This does not include supermarkets, butchers or factories, which produce food for retail sale. Within the canteen/catering sector a large amount of the waste generated can be reduced, reused and recycled.



Food Waste/Brown Waste

Previously much food waste was disposed of to landfills. This is becoming less of an option as many landfills are reaching their lifetime capacity. Separation of food waste for composting is an option that is becoming increasingly more popular. However, due to the large amount of food waste generated in the catering industry, it may not be viable to have an onsite composting system. In some parts of the country, organic compostables can be collected, separated and sent to a centralised composting plant.



The benefits of composting:

- 🔄 It is a natural method of disposal;
- 🔄 There is a reduction in the quantity of waste that is to be disposed of and therefore there is a reduction in disposal costs;
- 🔄 There is a reduction in the need to rely on landfills for disposing of waste;
- 🔄 The waste is converted into a valuable and beneficial end product, compost, which can be sold commercially;
- 🔄 Composting reduces the amount of methane gas emissions, that contribute to global warming, as methane is a greenhouse gas;
- 🔄 The finished product is a good natural soil fertiliser.

Most organic material that is biodegradable* can be composted.

This includes:

- 🔄 Fruit and vegetables that are cooked or uncooked;
- 🔄 Tea bags and coffee grounds;
- 🔄 Bread;
- 🔄 Pasta and rice;
- 🔄 Kitchen paper;
- 🔄 Crushed egg shells;
- 🔄 Cereal.

Items that cannot be composted:

- 🔄 Raw and uncooked meat;
- 🔄 Poultry and fish;
- 🔄 Bones, oils, greases, including butter and mayonnaise.

**Biological/Biodegradable Waste is any waste consisting of organic materials, which can be broken down by natural processes. This includes food waste generated in kitchens/canteens. This waste can be broken down naturally by bacteria, which feed on the organic material i.e. material that was once living, and the end product is compost.*

The following strategies overleaf can be implemented in canteens and catering facilities to help deal with the waste problem.

CANTENEN/CATERING WASTE

How to Reduce Canteen/Catering Waste

1. Where possible use reusable trays, cups, cutlery and plates in the canteen.
2. Milk, juices and soft drinks should be used in bulk from dispensers rather than in individual cartons, bottles and cans, or use drinks in concentrated form.
3. Separate bins should be provided in canteens for the various items that are to be recycled such as aluminum cans, paper, plastic packaging and glass. These should be labelled clearly to easily identify the waste type.
4. Avoid using items that have individual portions such as mayonnaise, ketchup, sugar, pepper, salt and vinegar. Instead provide sugar bowls, salt and pepper cellars, dispensers for ketchup and mayonnaise, small serving dishes for butter and jam, and finally small jugs for cream.
5. Buying items in bulk will help to reduce the amount and cost of packaging to be recycled.
6. If large amounts of food are left as wastage, consider reducing the size of portions served.
7. With regard to cooking oil it may be useful to install grease traps or interceptors in kitchen sinks, which can resolve drainage problems.
8. For take-out food, minimal packaging should be used for wrapping.
9. To prevent wastage, label all stock with the date of purchase and the perishable date and rotate perishable items.

How to Reuse Canteen/Catering Waste

1. Where possible use reusable cups, silverware and plates that are washable rather than disposable items.
2. Salt, pepper and sugar dispensers should be used instead of individually packaged items.
3. To avoid wasting food, meat cuttings and vegetables can be used as the basis for preparing stock.
4. To avoid the use of plastic packaging try buying fruit and vegetables in bulk. This way the cardboard packaging can be recycled.
5. Glass jars and containers can be reused for storage.
6. Instead of using paper kitchen towels an alternative is to use washable dishcloths and washable hand towels.

7. Use cloth linens and stained tablecloths as rags, dishcloths.
8. Use cloth napkins and table linen instead of paper/disposable ones.
9. Use reusable coffee filters as opposed to paper filters.
10. Used cooking oil can be collected and sold back to the manufacturer.

How to Recycle Canteen/Catering Waste

1. Limit the number of waste bins placed in the canteen and as many recycling bins should be placed in the canteen to make recycling easy and wasting harder.
2. Containers and bins for recycling steel/tin cans, glass jars and bottles, milk cartons should be provided in a designated area to encourage and promote recycling throughout the canteen.
3. Recycle bins should be placed directly beside waste bins as without this consistency recyclable material ends up in the waste bin.
4. Where possible glass should be chosen over plastic, as it is more easily recycled.

Disposal

This is the least favourable option in waste management and handling. Therefore efforts should be made to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Cooking grease, fats and oils cannot and should not be disposed of down the sink. If disposed of incorrectly these wastes can clog drain and sewer networks.

How to dispose of oil correctly

The most important thing to remember is to never dispose of cooking oil by the kitchen sink/drain. Cooking oil can be collected and recycled gaining many benefits:

- ♻️ The collection of oil can generate employment;
- ♻️ Costs savings arise for industry and consumers;
- ♻️ Recycling helps to conserve supplies of petrol, which is a non-renewable energy source;
- ♻️ Recycling of oil helps to extend the life and usefulness of natural resources.

If oil is collected for recycling, this must be carried out by an appropriate waste collector with a valid collection permit that is specialised in oil recovery.