



Stonyfield guidelines for green meetings and events

As part of our commitment to a healthy planet, the S.W.O.T. MAP team has developed Green Meeting and Event Guidelines that aim to **reduce the environmental impact of events and meetings both onsite and offsite**. While the guidelines are not an all-inclusive list of every possible action, they provide a standard that addresses environmental impact areas including energy use, transportation, waste, materials, and food.

*Please be sure to read both the "Before" and "After" sections **before** your meeting or event, so that you will be prepared to execute all applicable guidelines. For large meetings (20+ attendees), please read the entire document. For smaller meetings (less than 20 attendees), you need only reference the bullets with an asterisk (*).*

The **Before** Checklist

Event advertising/printed material

- * Strive for a paperless meeting. Promote and invite electronically; post event information, downloadable versions of programs, handouts, and itineraries on the shared drive for event participants; rely on PowerPoint without handouts and offer electronic versions upon request; avoid using folders, as they are often disposed of after a meeting.
- * Ensure that handouts and other printed materials are limited and, when needed, printed on 100% post-consumer, FSC-certified paper and printed double-sided.
- For reoccurring or annual events, avoid printing dates and slogans on signs, posters, and banners, so that they may be easily reused.
- * Use reusable name tags, not stickers, and have drop-off locations for collection after the event.

Transportation

- * Offer video- or teleconferencing for attendees who are not local.
- * Promote and incentivize alternative transport by organizing carpools and encouraging mass transportation, fuel-efficient vehicles, cycling, and walking. Highlight bike routes and public transit routes to the event location when applicable.
- Protect local air quality: Post signs imposing a "No idling" rule for buses, trucks, and cars.

Food and catering

- When selecting a caterer, include the following environmental priorities in your first discussion. Please feel free to use this sample "caterer letter," containing all of the requirements below, to inform catering partners of your requirements.

Food & Beverage

- * Offer a healthy menu that includes vegetarian meals (vegetables require less land and energy to produce than meat), and organic, all-natural, local, and seasonal food.
- * Serve fair-trade coffee & tea with organic sugar.
- * Serve foods that need not be individually packaged or require utensils (e.g., fruits & vegetables, crackers & cheese).
- * Serve bulk beverages, not individual containers (e.g., half-gallon of juice, not juice boxes).
- * Water should be served in pitchers, not bottled, with reusable cups provided.
- If any foods provided come from local farms or are certified organic, note them as such. Place small cards in front of the food indicating what it is, from what farm, and where the farm is located.

Packaging

- * Choose alternatives to Styrofoam. Washable containers are best. Avoid disposable packaging such as Saran Wrap and aluminum foil, although foil can be recycled if clean.
- * Buy food and drink items in bulk or "loose" at reduced cost and with less packaging.
- * Food items such as sandwiches should not be individually wrapped, to reduce packaging waste.
- * Choose bulk condiments instead of individually wrapped sugar packets, salt & pepper, creamers, etc. Use bowls and shakers that can be reused, letting people can serve themselves. In lieu of individual creamers, milk or cream can be served in original cartons on ice or in a pitcher.

Serving items & decoration

- * Use reusable silverware, dishware, cups, and napkins. Avoid disposables and plastic items. An alternative is biodegradable materials.
- * Find alternatives for coffee stirrers, straws, paper doilies, etc. Wooden or biodegradable stirrers could be provided upon request only.
- Use cloth tablecloths & napkins if possible. If not, use paper ones made from recycled paper.
- * If you are having a buffet, use smaller than dinner-sized plates for the food. This discourages people from taking too much food, which would then just go to waste.
- Consider sustainable table centerpieces such as potted plants, local/pesticide-free flowers, cut tree branches, soy candles, or fruits that guests can take home or reuse.

Adopt zero waste: reduce, reuse, recycle & compost

1. Educate

- * Encourage the 3 Rs and composting among attendees with visible signage, written announcements, and during opening remarks. See “What to do with event waste” below.
- * Be sure to understand all parties’ recycling needs; inform any event contractors, exhibitors, and vendors about recycling procedures prior to the event.

2. Reduce, reuse, recycle

- * Go paperless and rely on PowerPoint without handouts. Offer electronic versions upon request. If paper must be used, be sure to print double-sided and use 100% post-consumer, FSC-certified paper.
- * Close the recycling loop by purchasing locally produced recycled products and materials.
- * Order materials in bulk (not individually wrapped) to reduce packaging waste (e.g., decorations, party favors).
- Place several drop-off points by exits for participants to deposit their nametag into at the end of the event.
- * Provide clearly marked recycling and compost containers throughout the venue. No trash can should stand alone without a recycling bin. Be sure to provide caterers with bins. If caterers are on site cooking and/or serving food, ensure their staff uses the appropriate trash/recycling receptacles provided to them.
- Purchase biodegradable “to-go” containers for people to take leftover food with them.
- Prearrange leftover food donation. Soup kitchens may be willing to pick up the leftovers. For more information, see “What to do with event waste” below.

3. Composting

- For large events, composting arrangements should be made. Set up compost bins throughout event (brown paper yard waste bags work well, as do biodegradable plastic bags).

4. Reduce energy usage

- Seek out naturally lit meeting areas if possible.

The After Checklist

- * Remind attendees to drop off name tags at drop-off points.
- * Thoroughly rinse and recycle all yogurt cups.
- * Meeting host(s) are responsible for recycling & washing dishes, cups, and silverware used during the meeting.
- * Any excess food should be saved in the fridge and donated to a local soup kitchen. For more information, see “What to do with event waste” below.
- * Collect and save materials for future events like nametags or banners.
- Collect all biodegradable items (paper napkins, etc.) and food scraps, with the exception of dairy, fats and oils, and meat and bones.
- * Remember to turn off all lights/shut off all electronics after the event.

What to do with event waste

- Leftovers. Call your local soup kitchen. Items of food safety concern (e.g., mayonnaise or meat sitting out for hours) should not be donated. The Good Samaritan law protects companies from litigation were someone to become sick after eating something donated “in good will.”
- Recycling and trash. Please refer to your organization’s recycling and trash policies.