

Sustainable Waste Management in Hospitality

Large Restaurants, Bars, & Hotels



Understanding Waste Types



- General Waste - black bins
- Dry Mixed Recycling - green bins
- Organic/Food Waste - brown bins
- Glass Waste - blue bins

Common Waste Types in Hospitality



- ➔ Coffee cups (non-compostable or compostable)
- ➔ Food-soiled paper & pizza boxes
- ➔ Plastic food wrap, sachets, take-away containers
- ➔ Bottles & broken glasses
- ➔ Expired food and prep waste

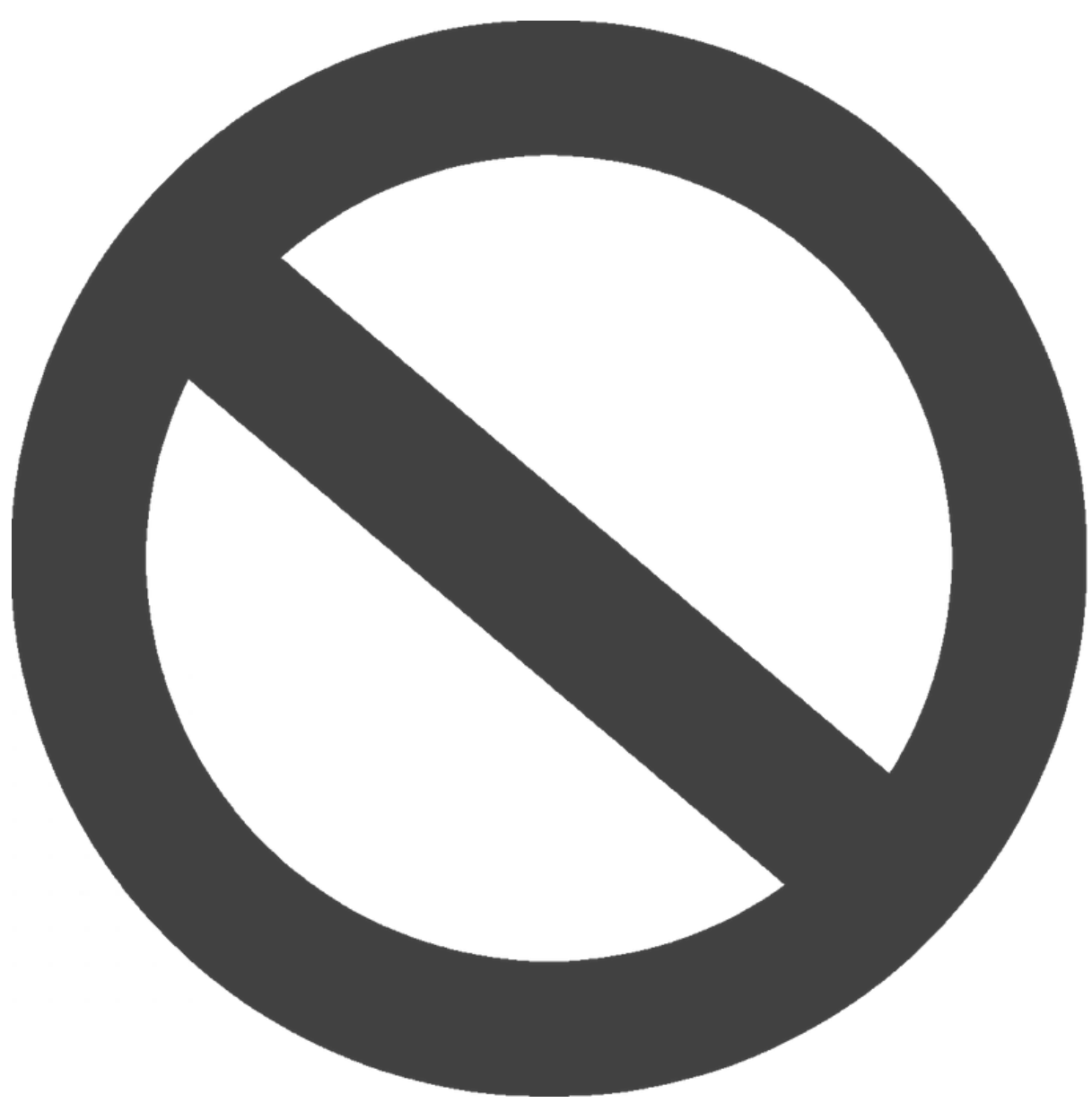
Waste Bin Guidelines

What goes in the recycling bin?

- ✓ Must be clean, dry, & loose
- ✓ Recyclable items: cardboard delivery boxes, washed salad tubs, plastic bottles, sauce containers, paper menus
- ✓ No food, no liquids, no soft plastics with food residue



Common Recycling Mistakes



- 1 Coffee cups & lids (leftover coffee or residues) - organic waste
- 2 Black bags are **not** acceptable in recycling bins
- 3 All food waste should be placed in a food/organic bin. A bag with all recycling but with one banana skin or some coffee grinds etc. is considered contaminated
- 4 Liquid should be emptied before from all bottles before placing in the recycling bin

What Goes in the General Waste Bin?



Cling film, half emptied sauce sachets, styrofoam, contaminated items



Broken crockery, mop heads, used blue roll with cleaning products



Netting from fruit & vegetables



Contaminated recycling that has food stuck to it or unwashed

Common General Waste Mistakes

1

Placing recyclable items (like clean plastics or paper) in general waste leads to lost recycling opportunities.

2

Disposing organic food waste into general bins does not facilitate its conversion to biogas and fertilizer.

3

Overfilling general bins with glass or WEEE (electrical) waste poses safety risks and violates regulations.

4

Mixing hazardous items (like batteries, vapes or cleaning chemicals) in general waste endangers staff and the environment.

5

Contaminated general waste increases collection costs and may result in regulatory penalties.

What Goes in the Organic Bin?



- ✓ Cooked and uncooked fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Tea bags and coffee grinds
- ✓ Napkins and paper towels (without cleaning liquids)
- ✓ Cooked meat and fish
- ✓ Food soiled cardboard
- ✓ Oil and grease leftovers (not grease trap oil, as this should be disposed of with correct supplier)
- ✓ Out of date or gone off packaged food such as yogurts/breads/meats/ fruit and veg. etc.



Contamination of Organic Waste Bins

Avoid disposing of the following items in organic bins:

- 1 Plastic items –straws, cutlery, wrap, gloves
- 2 Foil & metal –aluminum wrap, canlids, twist ties
- 3 Glass or ceramics –broken drinkware or plate pieces
- 4 Cleaning products –wipes, cloths, or soap

Proper sorting of organic waste can lower disposal fees and improve public perception. Helps your business hit green targets and comply with local regulations!

Staff Training & Turnover Strategy

Implement waste segregation training into onboarding

Hotels and large restaurants often have high staff turnover, shift work, and diverse roles.

Add:

- A structured induction training module for new hires
- Visual SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) per role
- QR codes or posters with quick-access video training in multiple languages

53%

Of establishments train their staff in proper waste management protocol.*

Clear & consistent bin labelling

In large establishments with multiple departments, unclear or inconsistent bin labelling leads to frequent contamination and confusion.

Add:

- Standardised colour-coded labels across all departments
- Labels should include images/icons and multilingual text to support diverse teams
- Consider hanging bin signage at eye level where floor bins may not be immediately visible

Only

33.3%

of establishments properly label their bins.*

*Based on a KeyGreen/TCD 2025 Sustainability report

Waste Segregation Checklist



Ensure your business is set up for waste segregation success by completing checklist.

- All departments (kitchen, housekeeping, wait staff, events, admin, etc.) been assigned waste responsibilities
- Clearly labelled multi-stream bins available in every key location (kitchens, staff areas, public areas)
- There is adequate space near prep areas to prevent overflow and reduce cross-contamination
- Recycling bins checked for contamination before being moved to outdoor containers
- Bins are colour-coded and consistent across floors
- Bins are placed side by side to encourage correct waste segregation
- Cleaning chemicals containers are clearly labelled and not placed in recycling waste bins once finished
- Waste management is part of onboarding for all new hires
- Posters or quick-reference guides are displayed in all staff areas
- Regular waste-related updates or mini challenges (e.g. reduce food waste week) are used to keep staff engaged

Scenario Based Learning



Scenario One

A food delivery arrives with cardboard boxes, soft plastic wrap, and ice packs. Staff place it all in one bin.

Training Focus: How to separate packaging waste and who is responsible (kitchen porter, chef, etc.)

Scenario Two

After a wedding event, staff have 30 minutes to clear the room. Glassware, confetti, food scraps, and decorations are all mixed on tables.

Training Focus: Time-efficient sorting. Having labelled bins or trolleys pre-set. Assigning team leads.

Scenario Three

The kitchen's recycling bin is full during service, and staff start using black bags for clean plastics.

Training Focus: What to do when bins are full? How to escalate or where to find backups?