

TOWARD ZERO WASTE

EVENT AND WEDDING CHECKLIST

WASTE REDUCTION MUST HAVES FOR YOUR EVENT

- Ask the event venue to provide FoodPlus!/compost and recycling in addition to landfill service. If they do not provide these services reach out to SSC, Nooksack Valley Disposal, or your local hauler to request totes for your event.
- Make sure all waste stations offer all three streams. It is better to have fewer centralized stations with all waste streams available.
- Include educational signs on all waste stations for guests and employees. Make your own posters or download and print [Sustainable Connections posters](#).
- Train employees and volunteers on proper waste sorting with this [guide](#).
- Ask food vendor(s) to follow the guidelines in this [TZW Vendor agreement](#).
- Provide durable dishware plates, cups, silverware, napkins when possible.
- When durable dishware is not possible opt for certified compostable ware. See what is accepted at local facilities [here](#). If vending in Bellingham, this is required, read more [here](#).
- All single use condiments and utensils need to be given out upon request only or displayed on a self-serve station, it's the [law](#)! Best practice is to have a bulk condiment station.
- Designate "paper towels only" receptacles in the bathroom; paper towels can be composted with FoodPlus! Use [Sustainable Connections posters](#).
- Source local food, beverages, and flowers. Check out the [Eat Local First Map](#) for ideas.
- Ask exhibitors to follow the guidelines in the [TZW Exhibitor agreement](#).

BEYOND THE BASICS WITH WEDDING TIPS AND TRICKS

Invites

- Go paperless with a wedding website and or e-invites. Making any changes to wedding day plans is much easier this way.
- If you choose to send out paper invites, opt for recycled paper. Make sure the invite is free of glitter and plastic so that it can be recycled later on.

Food

- Right size your menu for the number of guests you invite with the [Guest-Imator](#).
- Serve finger foods as appetizers and supply napkins and toothpicks, rather than plates and forks.
- Donate unserved pans of food to local shelters through our Food Recovery Program. Instructions for events and after-hours donations can be found [here](#).
- Provide compostable or reusable to-go containers for your guests to take surplus food home.
- Avoid paper menus and use a chalkboard or QR code instead.

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Bar

- Get a keg of local beer or cider and serve with reusable cups.
- Skip the straws and skewers all together or opt for paper straws and bamboo skewers.

Decorations

- Instead of placeholders, let guests sit where they want.
- Rent or borrow decor. If you must buy decor, opt for higher quality items you can then give away as wedding favors.
- Use potted plants in place of fresh flower arrangements. Give away as wedding favors.
- Use dried flowers or recycled paper confetti instead of rice, bubbles, or plastic confetti.
- Use cloth tablecloths instead of plastic.

Flowers

- Flowers are organic but floral tape, wire, pins, and foam are not. If you choose to decorate with fresh flowers, ask for minimal use of the non-compostable extras. Take the time to dismantle and compost the flowers.
- Consider using a local u-pick flower farm and harvesting yourself. Put fresh cut flowers in a variety of fun vases.
- Consider paper flowers. They make great keepsakes.

Apparel

- Rent your tuxes and wedding party attire.
- Shop second-hand wedding shops or vintage for a unique and classic look.
- Let the wedding party pick their dresses/suits so they get something they like and may wear again.

Gifts and Wedding Favors

- Tell your guests you are aiming for a low waste wedding and what that means.
- Make a gift registry and ask guests to stick to it.
- Ask guests for cash so that you can spend your money on the honeymoon or a bigger life purchase.
- Tell guests to skip the wrapping paper or opt for reusable gift bags.
- Refrain from branded items, people are more likely to keep or save something that doesn't have your name on it.
- Consider giving centerpieces or decorations away.
- Giveaway functional wedding favors like a beverage glass or photo frame.
- Donate to a charity of your choice instead of spending money on wedding favors. Let your guests know and offer a way for them to find out more about your charity of choice.