How to Make Your Event Zero Waste

What is a zero waste event?

The goal of a zero waste event is to achieve as much waste diversion from the landfill as possible. This includes reduction of waste and use of recycling and composting.

What is composting?

Composting is the recycling of organic material to be used as a soil amendment or as a medium to grow plants. Organic materials, such as yard trimmings and food residuals, constitute 30% of the US waste stream, as documented by the EPA. Compost can reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers, promote higher yields of agricultural crops, and help remediate environmentally degraded lands and soils¹.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recyclable*</th>
<th>Compostable*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottles, cans, aluminum foil, tin foil trays, pizza boxes, plastic containers, paper (acceptable recyclables can be found at <a href="http://www.recycle.umich.edu">www.recycle.umich.edu</a> – “How Can I Recycle…?” tab)</td>
<td>Items obtained from SSI (plates, cups, utensils, bags) (plastic packaging on the cups and utensils is compostable, but plastic on the plates is not) Napkins, food (bones and peels are acceptable), coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, toothpicks (no plastic)</td>
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*See Recyling/Compost Signage on following pages.

Step by Step Zero Waste Guide

1. Avoid mass distribution of handouts and fliers by advertising via electronic means.
   - Digital Ads: electronic ads can be placed in the Union and on campus computing sites on monitors (reservations: [https://campusinvolvement.umich.edu/sorc/content/digital-ad-request-form](https://campusinvolvement.umich.edu/sorc/content/digital-ad-request-form))
   - Social Media: take advantage of Facebook, Twitter, and other sites to spread the word
   - Advertise on UM events ([www.events.umich.edu](http://www.events.umich.edu)) and on Maize Pages
2. Order compostable materials from SSI.
   • Fill out the zero waste request form at www.sustainability.umich.edu/ssi/zero-waste to get plates, cups, utensils and bags. All napkins are compostable!
3. SSI will contact you about picking up your materials.
4. During your event, make an announcement at the beginning to inform attendees what is compostable and where they can compost. Let attendees know what you are doing and why! Being green is fun 😊
   • It is also a good idea to have volunteers staff the compost bags; especially at your first zero waste event. This is because the zero waste concept is new to many people. The volunteers should know what materials can go into the compost bag and avoid contamination of waste into the compost bags.
5. Tie up the compost bag (with only compost inside) and drop them in the SSI compost bins. SSI has a bin at the EECS loading dock on north campus and the Union loading dock on central campus. See following pages for maps.
6. Bring any extra compostable materials back to where you picked them up for SSI to use at other events.

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¹http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/composting/basic.htm
Central Campus Compost Drop-Off

The compost bins are located in the basement of the UM Student Union, which is at the intersection of State St. and S. University Ave. Please use the attached pictures to help guide you to the compost bins.

Once you arrive at the Student Union:
-- Go into the basement of the Union and walk pass Subway into the Tap Room (Picture #1).
-- As soon as you enter into the Tap Room, turn to the left down a small hallway and you should see a door that reads “Authorized Personnel Only”
-- Once you go through that door, the bins should be on the right with a series of garbage cans and recycle bins. **Be sure that you put the compost into the bins that are labeled “Compostables Only”!** (Picture #2)

Picture #1:

Picture #2:
What’s Compostable?

Only disposable items that have **COMPOSTABLE** printed on them or meet the ASTM D6400 or D6868 standard are acceptable. “Biodegradable” doesn’t equal “compostable.”