

# Reducing and Recycling Food Waste

## Waste series

If you serve food as part of your offering to your customers, an area to make significant savings is by preventing food waste. Reducing the quantity of waste you produce will save you money by reducing your waste disposal charges and also by reducing the amount of food you need to purchase. Put simply, waste costs money. By wasting less you will also reduce your environmental impact.

### Reducing food waste

Food waste is more than likely one of the heaviest and largest items in your bin and costs a lot for disposal. Every tonne of food waste produced costs your business in the region of £1,700. If you are a restaurant, hotel or leisure facility, this is likely to be in excess of £3,500. The true cost of food waste is not just the cost of disposal, but includes the money and time spent buying, storing and cooking it.

### What do you know about your food waste?

- **Identify where your food waste occurs** – how much is through spoilage in storage, during preparation and from plate waste (i.e. customer leftovers)? Helpful tracking sheets are available from [www.wrap.org.uk/resource-centre](http://www.wrap.org.uk/resource-centre)
- **Measure your waste** – where possible get an idea of the amount of food wasted by weighing or counting numbers of bins or buckets. Don't worry about being very accurate – it is just to give you a general idea.

This starting point will show you the major areas of waste and what is costing you the most money. Once you have implemented changes, you can repeat the measurements and should be able to see the areas where you have reduced waste and saved money.

**Did you know?** Businesses producing at least half a 240 litre bin of food waste per week are wasting in the region of £120. This includes ingredient purchase costs, transport and waste management charges.

### Top tips to reduce food waste

The actions that are most appropriate for your business to reduce food waste will depend on the



level of food service provided, from breakfast only to a full service commercial kitchen. Once you have identified where waste is occurring you can adjust your practices. A lot of waste can be avoided by reviewing the following areas.

### Purchasing practices

- Only buy what you need
- Bulk buy non-perishable items
- Have one person in charge of purchasing to avoid duplication of orders and develop relationships with suppliers

### Menu planning and portion sizes

- Offer side dish elements (such as side salads) as an option rather than as standard
- Offer different portion sizes to suit customers' varying appetites
- Offer customers the option to take away anything not eaten in a carry out box or save it and use it the following day for staff lunches
- Plan menus, and use seasonal, local produce

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### Storage methods

- Check fridge and freezer temperatures regularly
- Use air-tight containers
- Use first in first out system of stock control

### Food preparation practices

- Decrease preparation waste by reducing trimmings of vegetables, meat and fish
- Use carcasses, bones and trimmings etc. to prepare stock for sauces or soups
- Employ 'nose to tail eating' i.e. develop menu dishes that use less popular cuts such as offal
- Managing variable demand – tracking busy periods/times of the day and year; ordering stock and preparing food accordingly.



You can approach your current waste contractor, or local authority, to determine if they provide a separate food waste collection service. If they do, they will be able to advise you on what you need to do.

To find a waste contractor offering food waste recycling services in your area, go to Zero Waste Scotland's Business Resource Centre [www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/BusinessResourceCentre](http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/BusinessResourceCentre)

### Further advice

For more information on opportunities to reduce and recycle food waste see:

**Love Food Hate Waste** – providing recipe ideas, hints and tips for preventing food waste and reusing leftover ingredients <http://scotland.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

**Unilever Food Solutions** – run a 'Wise up on Waste' service that aims to help chefs and cooks run their kitchen more efficiently, reduce waste and importantly, save money [www.unileverfoodsolutions.co.uk/our-services/your-kitchen/wise-waste-business](http://www.unileverfoodsolutions.co.uk/our-services/your-kitchen/wise-waste-business)

For further advice contact Resource Efficient Scotland, [www.resourceefficientscotland.com](http://www.resourceefficientscotland.com) or call 0808 808 2268.

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**Legislation** – unless you currently produce less than 50kg of food waste a week or are based in a rural area you will need to arrange for a separate food waste recycling collection in order to meet the requirements of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations.

To find out more about the Waste Regulations go to [www.resourceefficientscotland.com/regulations](http://www.resourceefficientscotland.com/regulations)

### Recycling of food waste

The greatest opportunities to make cost savings come from preventing edible food from being wasted. However, some food waste is unavoidable. If the waste could not have been prevented or reused, it can be recycled, provided you segregate it from other waste.

#### Top tip:

In some areas you may also be able to donate surplus ingredients to charitable organisations, such as FareShare, who have regional depots in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen [www.fareshare.org.uk/giving-food/](http://www.fareshare.org.uk/giving-food/)