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Clackamas County
www.clackamas.us

How to Track Food Waste in Your Kitchen

Knowing how much food you are wasting sets up opportunities for cost savings and waste prevention.

Hablamos español. Por favor comuníquese con nosotros para recibir recursos y servicios en español.

FOOD ESTABLISHMENT



Establishing a food waste tracking system is the first step to understand what foods may be wasted and why. The information gathered from tracking helps you identify how waste prevention can make the biggest difference in your overall food costs and your business's commitment to sustainability. An ongoing tracking system sets a baseline and shows progress as you initiate food waste prevention steps.

Get started

- Identify areas where pre-service food waste may be generated (prep stations, hot and cold line).
- Determine how many and what size of bins you need. Smaller bins or see-through Cambros may make it easier to identify items in the bin.
- Label bins to indicate which bins to be used. Start with a bin labeled Pre-Service. You could also separate waste by loss reason (e.g. overproduction, expired).

Train staff

- Inform staff the plan, when and how long you will measure food waste.
- Show staff the bins, explain where they will be placed. Make it clear that all pre-service food waste will be separated and collected in designated bins.
- Ask staff scraping wasted food into the bins to fill out the tracker sheet each time. Emphasize that it's important to record how full the bin is, what food was collected and the reason the food was wasted.
- Engage staff in discussions about how to reduce food loss.

Track waste

- Place labeled containers and tracker sheets in each location where you will collect food waste, such as the prep station, dish pit, etc.
- Record information on the tracking sheet each time wasted food is scraped into the bin. Check in with staff and answer any questions.

Analyze data

Use the data to start conversations amd generate ideas about how to prevent waste.

- Tally the total number of bins or gallons of food waste during a week, and convert to weight of wasted food (use the conversion table).
- Divide the total number of covers during a week by the total pounds of food waste to determine how much food is being wasted per cover.
- Calculate the cost per pound of wasted food. If you don't know the per pound cost of food items you can use $1.17, which is the estimated median cost/lb across all food categories. For higher-priced items it will be more valuable to use actual average cost/lb to know how much money you can save through waste prevention.
- Once you've determined the cost of wasted food, you can compare that to the cost of food purchases or sales. Ask us for a **Food Waste Analysis Spreadsheet** that provides more detailed instructions and analysis formulas.



Tracking Food Waste

A strategy to reduce food waste (for employees)



Scrape

All pre-service food waste should be separated and collected in designated bins. Place containers in each location where you will collect food waste, such as the dish pit, prep station, etc.



Track

Staff scraping the wasted food into the bins should fill out the tracker sheet each time wasted food is put into the bin. It's important to record how full the bin is and note any observations about what kind of food was collected and why it might have been wasted.



Dump and rinse

Ensure that bins are cleaned as per your procedure. Place containers in each location where you will collect food waste, such as the dish pit, prep station, etc.



Share

Share what you are learning with your team and your manager, this will help everyone understand what is wasted and how waste can be prevented.

REASONS FOR FOOD LOSS

Trim waste: Food that was cut or trimmed off because it's inedible or not used in menu items.

Overproduction: Food donation organizations need to access the time, effort and coordination necessary to pick up or receive your donation.

Spoilage: Food that goes bad or spoils before it is used.

Expired/dated: Food that was prepped or prepared but not used as planned.

Burned/contaminated: Food that is not usable because it was improperly cooked or contaminated.

Dropped: Food that was dropped or mishandled before it reached the customer.

Equipment failure: Food that was wasted because equipment breaks or power is lost.

For more information, contact:
Clackamas County Sustainability & Solid Waste
www.clackamas.us/recycling/foodwaste
503-742-4458 | greenbiz@clackamas.us

SCAN ME

CLACKAMAS COUNTY