

# It Takes Teamwork

Your most important resource is your employees. Not only will they have many ideas for reducing waste but also without their support it would be difficult to implement any changes successfully. Let your staff know that waste reduction is important to you, and encourage their suggestions and input. You may even choose to hold an employee contest for the best waste reduction tips!

- Be sure to keep staff informed of the changes you implement, and explain why they are important. If you have started a new recycling system, are buying different, reusable products, or have switched to less toxic cleaners, for example, it's vital to train staff in their use.
- Make sure that your employees understand what to do — for example, there should be clear signs on the recycling bins.
- Remember, our communities are becoming increasingly multi-cultural, so not all your employees will have the same backgrounds, customs or languages. Meet with your staff to ensure that everyone understands your waste reduction goals and in-house procedures.
- Where you can, supply incentives that will keep your staff interested and motivated in helping your business achieve its aims. Part of the money that might be saved by switching to a reusable product, for example, could go to a staff social fund, or employees who spend time helping to plan and implement new programs could be paid overtime hours and/or be recognized with an employee service award.

Implementing "green" purchasing policies does not necessarily mean higher costs. Some environmental choices may be more expensive initially, but will often pay for themselves through reduced disposal costs.



## Resources

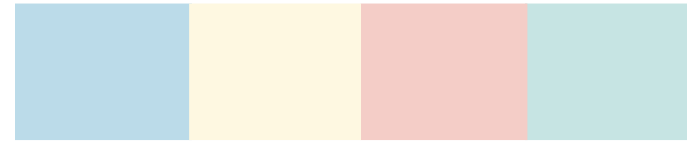
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[www.regionalfoodbank.org](http://www.regionalfoodbank.org)

Recycling Guidebook for the Hospitality and Restaurant Industry- provides steps for restaurants and hotels to follow to implement a waste reduction and recycling program.  
[www.p2pays.org/ref/05/04032.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/05/04032.pdf)  
 Restaurant Waste Reduction Manual- provides a step-by-step approach to developing a waste reduction campaign.  
[www.p2pays.org/ref/03/02368.pdf](http://www.p2pays.org/ref/03/02368.pdf)  
 Food Waste Composting: Institutional and Industrial Applications-  
[www.ces.uga.edu/pubcd/B1189.htm](http://www.ces.uga.edu/pubcd/B1189.htm)

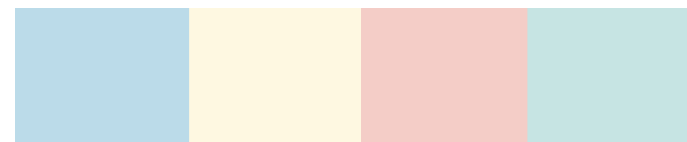
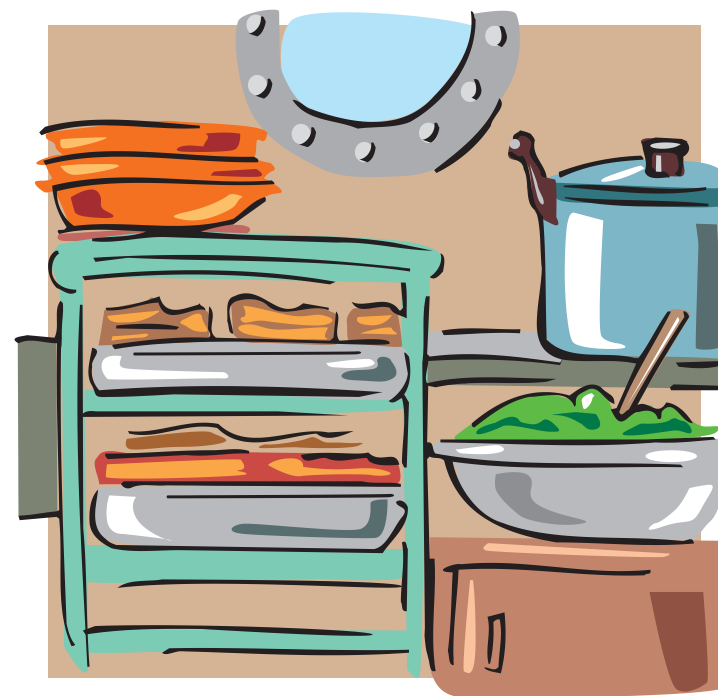
Food service establishments can save money and protect the environment by reducing waste and practicing pollution prevention. Remember that participating in a pollution prevention program can create an improved public image for your business.



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# Food for Thought Best Management Practices for Food Handling Facilities



# BMPs for Food Handling Facilities

Almost all our activities have environmental costs. It takes energy and resources to produce goods and services, and energy and resources to deal with the ultimate disposal of those goods and their byproducts. Such environmental costs could include noise, air, or water pollution, or a strain on solid waste disposal facilities.

Food services operations and businesses are significant contributors to this solid waste stream. However, with some thought and careful planning, they can not only reduce their waste - and save on disposal costs - they can also become more environmentally efficient in other ways, such as energy use. This guide will be helpful to company managers who want to implement environmentally aware policies and practices. For further information, call the DEQ Customer Services Division at: (405) 702-1000 or (800) 869-1400.

## Why is this important?

Fats, Oils, and Greases aren't just bad for your arteries and your waistline; they're bad for sewers too. Sewer overflows and backups can cause health hazards, damage interiors, and threaten the environment. An increasingly common cause of overflows is sewer pipes blocked by grease. Grease gets into the sewer from drains as well as poorly maintained grease traps.

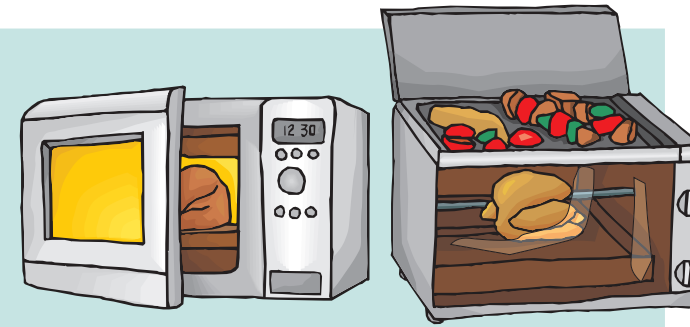
Blocked sewer pipes can result in raw sewage overflowing into your business. This can be an expensive and unpleasant cleanup. Contact with raw sewage also increases your exposure to disease-causing organisms.

Some simple best management practices can prevent these problems and save money.



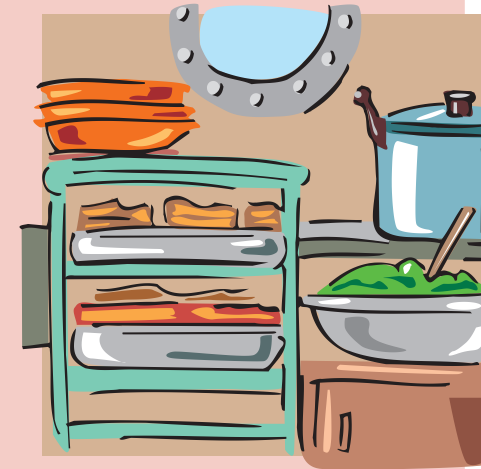
## Behind the Scenes Equipment

- Develop and implement a monthly cleaning and maintenance program for all your equipment. If your refrigerator, freezer, or air conditioners are being serviced, ensure that the CFCs are being treated in accordance with federal regulations that require recovery of ozone-depleting substances. Remember to check the air intakes on your appliances, too, where dust can cover openings. Regular maintenance of your refrigerators and freezers extends the life of the compressors, reduces energy costs and avoids food spoilages caused by breakdowns.
- Keep oven equipment calibrated to prevent over-baked products.
- Clean your fryers and filter the oil daily. This extends the life of both the fryer and the oil. Built-up of carbon deposits on the bottom of the fryer act as an insulator that forces the fryer to heat longer, thus causing the oil to break down sooner.
- Use a test kit supplied by your grocery distributor in order to determine when to change your fryer oil. This is more accurate than judging by the appearance of the oil.



## Production areas

- Create staff incentives to reduce breakage or loss of china, glass and silver supplies. Employees with a "clean record" for the month could be given cash bonuses, gift certificates, a night off, or a company t-shirt, depending on your budget.
- Check for accidentally discarded china or cutlery before throwing out dining room trash.
- Place rubber mats around bus and dishwashing stations to reduce glass and china breakage — as well as injury resulting from slips.
- Have employees use non-disposable cups for their own drinks.
- Decrease your use of plastic garbage can liners by manually compacting the trash in the cans and emptying them only when they are full.
- Ensure that cracked or chipped dishware is discarded as it cannot be properly cleaned and sanitized.



## Paper Supplies

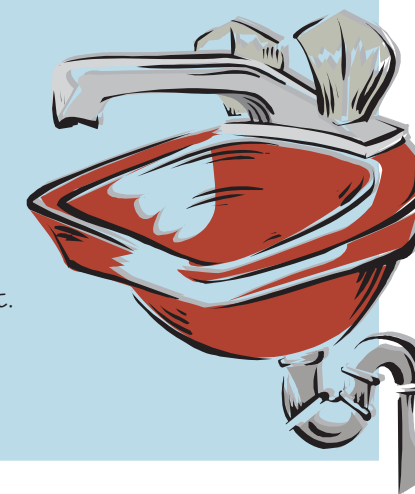
- Purchase paper products made from recycled materials. This could include toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, placemats, bags, menus and more. Try to find products that contain a high percentage of "post-consumer" waste: that means it's made from paper collected from residential and business recycling programs, not just from trimmings and paper scraps from within the paper mill.
- Use straw-style stir sticks for bar beverages instead of the solid style. They usually cost less per unit and use less plastic. Additionally, use only one straw per drink, if any straw is necessary at all.
- Serve straws from health department-approved dispensers rather than offering them pre-wrapped.



## Did you know? . . .

Food handling facilities can contribute to storm water pollution, mainly through improper cleanup practices that allow food particles, oil and grease, and cleaning products to flow to a street, gutter, or storm drain. Storm water that flows directly to local creeks may contain a variety of pollutants. Storm water pollution is a serious problem for wildlife dependent on our waterways, and for people who live near polluted streams.

Additionally, there are federal, state, county, city and town ordinances that apply to the discharge of materials other than storm water to the storm system. In Oklahoma, the discharge of oil and grease to a sanitary line is governed by the requirements of the receiving treatment plant.



## Purchasing General Ideas

- One of the most important ways to reduce waste is to reduce excess packaging. Let your supplier know that you are serious about cutting down on unnecessary waste, and ask him/her to keep you informed of new and existing products that meet your requirements but are minimally packaged. The more restaurants that indicate a preference for less wasteful alternatives, the faster manufacturers will respond with better packaging design.
- Ask suppliers to take back and reuse their shipping boxes and pallets.
- Implementing "green" purchasing policies doesn't necessarily mean higher costs. Some environmental choices may be more expensive initially, but will often pay for themselves through reduced disposal costs. As well, some cleaners, drink mixes and other products are more economical when bought in concentrated form or in bulk, instead of ready-to-use and pre-portioned.

## Beverages, Sauces, Dressings and Oils

- Serve carbonated beverages from a beverage gun or dispenser rather than from a bottle or can. If you must use bottles or cans, recycle them along with your liquor bottles.
- Buy bar mixes in concentrated form, then reconstitute them and portion them into reusable serving containers.
- Some Canadian wineries offer their cooking wine in refillable barrels. Ask your supplier to investigate this option.
- Buy and use dispenser beverages (i.e. juice, iced tea, hot chocolate) in concentrated or bulk form.
- When possible, use refillable condiment bottles and refill them from condiments purchased in bulk. This can apply to ketchup, coffee cream, sugar and other items