

## HOW TO: REDUCE DISPOSABLE UTENSILS

Does your office use disposable plastic utensils & dishware?  
These items create a lot of waste.

### Influence Behavioral Change

Consider this an opportunity to influence behavioral change! This document serves as a guide for everyday actions to broaden the scope of waste reduction efforts and encourage participation of the Penn community. By following these simple steps, as well as the [Green Office Checklist](#), you can help normalize a culture of sustainability at your office. Begin by gaining support from your senior leadership and remember: this may be a challenge, but any difficulty you face is also a learning opportunity.

### Tips for Reduction

#### At Events

- **Ask Caterers to Provide Reusables** – Ask caterers to provide, then pick up, non-plastic utensils (i.e. washable silverware, bamboo utensils, wooden or ceramic chopsticks). You may also ask them to provide ceramic plates, glass cups, cloth napkins, and glass pitchers. Or...
- **Ask Caterers to Bring Less** – Ask caterers to bring fewer disposables (i.e. single-use plastic utensils); events often end with several items left over. You may also ask them to avoid bringing condiment packets and instead bring bulk containers for items such as ketchup, mayo, salt, mints, sugar, or others. You can also ask them to pick up event trays, bowls, and pitchers afterwards.



### Benefits of Reducing Disposable Utensils

- 1. Cut Costs** – Reducing disposable utensils (as well as dishware and cups) dramatically reduces the costs associated with consistently purchasing disposable items.
- 2. Better Quality** – Non-plastic utensils are better quality as they are more resilient to stress. Have you ever tried cutting a bagel with a plastic knife? It's impossible!
- 3. Less Waste** – By following the "Tips for Reduction" in this document, you can reduce the amount of items sent to landfill.



- **Order Finger Food** – Order foods like pizza, pretzels, cookies and other hors d'oeuvres in order to reduce plastic utensil usage. Or...
- **Order Family Style Dishes** – To avoid excess packaging, ask your caterer to serve "family style" dishes. For example, rather than ordering one boxed lunch per person, consider a sandwich platter and cookies.

# HOW TO: REDUCE DISPOSABLE UTENSILS

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## Tips for Reduction

### At Lunch

- **Set an Example** – Walk the walk and inspire coworkers by bringing your own utensils to lunch. Don't feel like you have to go it alone, however; partner up with a colleague or ask your Green Team for help!

- **Keep a Stock at Your Desk** – It's easier to remember silverware when you always have them at your desk.

Keep a waste-free kit, including reusable utensils, bottles, and dishware somewhere that's easily accessible.



### In the Break Room

- **Provide Reusable Utensils** – Provide utensils for your office kitchen that can be washed rather than thrown away. Or...

- **Encourage Staff to "BYO"** - Create a fun medley of community utensils to be shared within your office by encouraging coworkers to bring their own under-used silverware from home. If you don't have a kitchen, consider purchasing reusable utensil and container sets that everyone can take home and wash.

- **Display Signage** – Post easy to understand signs informing staff about the new silverware and reminding them to wash after use.

- **Remove Disposables** – Once stocked with reusables, consider removing disposables or post signage saying "Disposables for Guests Only".

### At the Waste Bins

- **Proper Signage** – Make sure your office contains signage clearly conveying that plastic utensils are recyclable and are to be disposed of in recycling bins. Campus signage is available at [this link](#).



### Get Creative

- **Craft & Repurpose** – When finished with plastic-ware, rather than dispose of them, why not wash and repurpose them? For instance, when decorating the office for the holidays, use spoons to make holiday decor rather than purchasing decor made from virgin resources.



### For More Information

**Penn Sustainability Website** – [www.sustainability.upenn.edu](http://www.sustainability.upenn.edu)

**Eco-Reps Website** – [www.sustainability.upenn.edu/get-involved/eco-reps](http://www.sustainability.upenn.edu/get-involved/eco-reps)

**Contact Us** – [sustainability@upenn.edu](mailto:sustainability@upenn.edu); 3101 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Share your sustainability story** – We want to hear about your efforts!



## HOW TO: REDUCE COFFEE WASTE



Does your office use disposable coffee cups & k-cups for coffee? These items create a lot of waste & some are not recyclable.

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### Benefits of Reducing Coffee Waste

- 1. Cut Costs** – Reducing coffee waste dramatically reduces the costs associated with consistently purchasing disposable items.
- 2. One-Time Use is Wasteful** – Did you know that Americans toss out an estimated 60 billion coffee cups per year? Styrofoam coffee cups, sugar packets, creamer cups, and K-cups are also not recyclable.
- 3. Better Quality** – Paper cups can warp, cause spills, and be very hot. Why not use a steel thermos and keep your coffee hot/cold for a longer period of time?

### Tips for Reduction

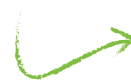
#### At Events

- **Ask Caterers to Provide Reusables or Recycled Items** – Ask caterers to provide, then pick up, ceramic coffee mugs, reusable coffee dispensers (rather than cardboard dispensers) or paper cups with recycled content. You may also ask them to provide biodegradable options, such as wooden rather than plastic stirring sticks and paper rather than styrofoam coffee cups.



- **Ask Caterers to Provide Items in Bulk** – Sugar and creamer packets are very small yet very wasteful in aggregate. Ask your caterer to provide these items in bulk.

Look for this logo when purchasing coffee & other food products



- **Ask Caterers to Bring Less** – Ask caterers to bring fewer disposables (i.e. paper coffee cups). Events often end with several items left over.
- **Order Fair Trade Coffee** – Farms must comply with strict environmental standards in order to be Fair Trade Certified. Look for the Fair Trade logo when deciding on coffee brands. By adhering to these standards, farmers also improve the quality of their products and livelihood.





## HOW TO: REDUCE COFFEE WASTE



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### Tips For Reduction

#### In the Break Room

- **Provide Reusables** – Provide reusable ceramic mugs, K-cups, and metal coffee filters for your office kitchen. You can also purchase paper cups made with recycled content. Make sure to purchase enough for everyone.
- **Switch to a Traditional Coffee Maker** – Switch from a Keurig to a traditional coffee maker. Modern coffee makers now come with pots large enough to hold 12 cups of coffee! You can use copper coffee filters rather than paper as well.
- **Encourage Staff to "BYO"** – Create a fun medley of community coffee mugs to be shared within the office by encouraging coworkers to bring their own under-used mugs from home. If you don't have a kitchen, consider purchasing a coffee thermos for each person to take home and wash.
- **Display Signage** – Consider posting easy to understand signs to inform staff about new community coffee mugs and to remind others to wash them after use.
- **Remove Disposables** – Once stocked with reusables, consider removing disposables from the break room or post a sign that says "Disposables for Guests Only".



Reusable K-cups!



#### At the Waste Bins

- **Signage** – Does your office have proper signage at your waste bins? Campus signage indicates important information, like "creamer cups belong in the waste bin". Campus signage is available at [this link](#).
- **Coffee Capsule Collection** – The Terracycle Zero Waste Box program includes a coffee capsule collection box for purchase. See [their website](#) for more details.



#### Get Creative

- When finished with disposable coffee cups, rather than dispose of them, why not wash and repurpose them? You can repurpose them as pencil holders - or, if you have a green thumb, use them as planters for your office plants (you can even save some leftover coffee grounds for said plants).

#### For More Information

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[www.sustainability.upenn.edu](http://www.sustainability.upenn.edu)

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## HOW TO: EXPAND REUSE COLLECTION



Does your office throw out lots of pens, books, & toner?  
These items (& more) can be reused & recycled!

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### Tips

#### In Your Office

- **Use a Service Provider** – Use one of the service providers, listed on the following pages (p. 2-4), to collect items from your office. They will often provide you with a collection box at no charge. Make sure to place collections boxes in lobbies or other public and easily accessible spaces.
- **Donate** – Give your items a second life. Several organizations, such as Goodwill and Philly Aids Thrift, will take your lightly used clothing and sometimes even your office supplies!
- **Get Creative** – Host a bulk collection event at your office during the [“Rethink Your Footprint”](#) campaign in November!

#### For More Information

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### Benefits of Reuse Collection Expansion

- 1. People In Need** – Why throw away items from the home and the office when there are plenty of people in dire need of these items? Give your items a second life rather than sending them to the landfill.
- 2. Throwing Away is Wasteful** – Expanding the use of collection programs in offices helps divert waste from landfill. This is also a simple way to get colleagues involved in sustainable behavior and pique their interest for future actions.

#### On Campus

- **Resources** – Used shoes, eyeglasses, clothing - you name it! There are multiple places on campus that already collect these items. See the following pages (p.2-4) for details.



## Start a new Collection and/or Site

### Recycling & Reuse Companies

These companies provide collection boxes. Some charge shipping or processing fees for the box; others offer those services for free. Some companies offer cash rewards based on the amount of materials recycled.

<b>Terracycle</b>
Offers free recycling services for specific products and also offers collection boxes for purchase <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Zero Waste Boxes</a> (purchase required), customizable boxes for purchase. There are many different waste streams to choose from; popular Boxes: coffee capsules, writing instruments, office supplies, and break room items.</li><li>• <a href="#">FREE recycling programs</a>, called "Brigades". Most of these are for specific brands of product, i.e. Colgate Oral Care Products Recycling</li><li>• Check out their <a href="#">Tools &amp; Resources Page</a></li></ul>
<b>Community Recycling</b>
Local organization headquartered in Trenton, NJ. Offers two FREE programs for offices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Shoebox Recycling</a> is a FREE program- recyclers even <u>receive cash back</u> based on lbs. collected! There is also the option to have this money donated to local charities. View their <a href="#">Informational poster</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Community Recycling for Campuses</a> also offers cash rewards based on lbs. Customizable program that collects shoes, clothes, and accessories.</li></ul>
<b>eForce Compliance</b>
Electronics and specialty recycling company (Offers recycling services for a fee). <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hosts public <a href="#">ewaste recycling events</a> across the region</li><li>• Offers <a href="#">electronics</a> and <a href="#">battery</a> recycling containers for offices</li></ul>
<b>Eyes of Hope</b>
<a href="#">Free donation program</a> of VSP Global. Offers FREE box and shipping is provided.

## Where to Donate Used Items

This list is organized by product type. Most of these organizations do not provide official collection boxes. Eco-Reps could make their own boxes and would be responsible for transporting or shipping the box to the donation center.

<b>Used Clothing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Philly Aids Thrift</a> accepts used clothing, among many other items, during regular business hours, 7 days a week.</li><li>• <a href="#">The Career Wardrobe</a> accepts many clothing donations such as business suits, professional outfits, and more.</li><li>• <a href="#">Goodwill</a> is the ultimate one-stop shop for clothing (and almost anything) donations.</li><li>• <a href="#">Planet Aid</a> provides outdoor collection bins; they also can help you host clothing drives in your office.</li></ul>
<b>Used Linens</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <a href="#">SPCA</a>, <a href="#">Morris Animal Refuge</a>, and many other animal shelters accept used linens, towels, sheets, etc.</li></ul>
<b>Plastic Bags</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Plasticfilmrecycling.org</a> provides a search engine to find drop off locations for plastic bags and other plastic films (many supermarkets in Philly host collections).</li><li>• CVS Locations</li></ul>
<b>Books</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Books Through Bars</a> is a nonprofit that donates books and educational materials to incarcerated individuals in PA, NJ, NY, MD, DE, VA &amp; WV. Make sure to read the book guidelines before donating.</li><li>• Support the Free Library of Philadelphia by donating books to the “Book Corner” &amp; “The Next Page”.</li><li>• <a href="#">Philadelphia Reads Book Bank</a> provides educators with books and supplemental classroom supplies.</li><li>• <a href="#">Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia</a> accepts gently-used children’s books, most in need for children 10 years and under.</li></ul>

## Existing Collection Locations on Campus

Used Shoe Recycling on Campus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities &amp; Real Estate Services, 3101 Walnut St., Rear Kitchen (<a href="mailto:sustainability@upenn.edu">sustainability@upenn.edu</a>)</li><li>• Nursing Fagin Hall, Elevator Lobby 1P Level (<a href="mailto:josk@nursing.upenn.edu">josk@nursing.upenn.edu</a>.)</li><li>• SAS Grad Division, 3401 Walnut St., Suite 322A (<a href="mailto:judithr@sas.upenn.edu">judithr@sas.upenn.edu</a>)</li></ul>
Eyeglasses Donations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact Ellen Iwamoto, Annenberg Public Policy Center (<a href="mailto:ellen.iwamoto@appc.upenn.edu">ellen.iwamoto@appc.upenn.edu</a>)</li></ul>
Goodwill Donations
<p>Penn has two on-campus collection bins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next to Rodin College House, 3901 Locust Walk</li><li>• Sansom West, 3650 Chestnut St. (next to the volleyball court)</li></ul> <p>Contact Residential Services via <a href="#">email</a> or phone at 215-898-3547.</p>
Battery and Light Bulb Recycling
<p>Existing locations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities &amp; Real Estate Services, 3101 Walnut St., Rear Kitchen</li><li>• <a href="#">Multiple locations</a> in the School of Engineering (<a href="#">map</a>)</li><li>• School of Medicine- Anat/Chem 217</li><li>• School of Nursing- Fagin Hall Lobby</li></ul>