



Food-Saving Practices – Courtesy of the NRDC Food Matters Initiative

The best way to reduce the impacts associated with food waste is to prevent waste altogether, so we suggest prioritizing prevention strategies in food waste challenges. The next most important strategy is to donate surplus food to organizations that can direct it to people in need. Finally, after maximizing prevention and donation, direct any remaining food scraps to animal feed, compost, or anaerobic digestion. See the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Food Recovery Hierarchy for more information on the food waste hierarchy.

1. Reduce/Prevent Food Waste

- Measure back-of-house and/or front-of-house food waste (this can be as simple as separating food waste into a bucket and counting the number of buckets generated each day for a week every month—or see our Resources list for information on other measurement tools).
- Adopt new practices for food purchasing, storage, and right-sized cooking quantities to minimize waste; if possible, track any changes in amounts of food purchased.
- Use foods that might otherwise be discarded (like imperfect fruits and vegetables and unusual plant parts), and take a “nose to tail” approach with animal products; record any new or modified recipes.
- Creatively repurpose surplus foods and record any new or modified recipes.
- Be flexible on portion sizes (e.g., offer smaller portions, half-size options, etc.).
- Cook in small batches and/or cook to order.
- Make side dishes and bread optional for your customers, and ensure that garnishes are edible.
- Actively encourage the use of (appropriately sized) carryout containers.
- Educate your customers by participating in the Save the Food campaign.
- Engage your staff through training on food waste reduction and food donation, and through recognition for practices that reduce food waste.
- Enlist at least three other businesses to sign up for the challenge.
- Since you know your business best, adopt other changes that reduce wasted food in your facility.

2. Donate Surplus Food

- Set up a partnership with a local charity that rescues food and make regular donations. (See Appendix A. Sample Resource List for a list of potential rescue organizations.) To the highest degree possible, keep track of how much and how often you are donating. (Tracking your donations allows you to get the fullest tax deduction for donating.)

3. Recycle Food Scraps

- Recycle food scraps by composting them (compost on-site, deliver to a composting facility, or contact a local hauler for pickup services).
- Keep track of how much you collect for composting, or if you use a hauler, ask the hauler to do so for you.
- Donate or sell food scraps for animal consumption (for instance, hog farms may accept baked goods and other foods) and keep track of how much and how often you donate.



City of Phoenix

