

LivingGreen

healthy environment, sustainable future

UCSF Living Green Catering Best Practices August 20, 2011

Please take the following guidelines into consideration when planning the catering services for your next meeting, conference or special event. When possible, give preference to Moffitt Catering at UCSF (<http://nutrition.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/catering/>), which offers sustainable catering, or UCSF Restaurants (<http://campuslifeservices.ucsf.edu/retail/services/cater>); they are familiar with these guidelines. If you use an off-campus catering service, be sure to provide them these guidelines.

1. **Order recycling and composting bins with signage.** When you order your venue, specify that you will need recycling and composting bins with proper signage in the meeting room and where food will be served. Before your event, confirm that there are containers with signage for compost, recycling and trash. On campus events need to have Facilities Management (FM) provide the appropriate waste receptacles (blue, green, black) for catered events. We highly encourage someone be assigned to orient attendees on appropriate segregation of waste.
2. **Choose/specify washable versus disposable.** When location and budget allow, the first choice is washable napkins, linens, dishware, cups and utensils at all events and meals.
3. If disposable is the only option, follow these guidelines:
 - a. **Avoid polystyrene foam:** The City and County of San Francisco (http://www.sfenvironment.org/our_programs/interests.html?ssi=3&ti=6&ii=127) prohibits any establishment that serves food prepared in San Francisco from using polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) containers. Any caterers from outside San Francisco are expected to avoid polystyrene foam service ware.
 - b. **Avoid plastic plates and bowls:** Paper plates and bowls can be composted.
 - c. **Use paper cups where appropriate:** Paper cups can be composted. If clear plastic is necessary, use plastic cups and recycle them.
 - d. **Avoid compostable clear plastic cups and flatware:** To avoid confusion, we currently do not encourage the use of compostable plastic cups and flatware (they often end up contaminating the recycling bins). We recommend using plastic flatware and cups that can be recycled.
 - e. **Use high post-consumer recycled content for paper napkins, towels and tablecloths:** Do not use plastic tablecloths.
4. **Source organic and/or local food whenever possible.** Many caterers will provide local and/or organic food if requested, but there maybe a price premium. Remember to offer vegetarian and vegan alternatives if you are choosing to serve meat and animal protein.
5. **Avoid individual bottled water.** Request water in pitchers or provide a water filling station.
6. **When possible, beverages, chips, side dishes and condiments should be offered in bulk containers—avoid single serving containers.** When a meeting is over eight people, bulk is better! Do not serve condiments in single serving containers: milk/creamer, sugar, jam, butter, mayonnaise, mustard, cream cheese, etc.

Cookies, fruit and desert can be served loose on platters without wrapping. Minimize the use of plastic stirrers, straws, and coffee cup sleeves. If condiments or beverages must be served in single serving containers, ensure that these are recyclable. However, remember that some items such as packets of jam, mayonnaise and mustard cannot be recycled.

7. **Avoid boxed lunches.** If possible, avoid boxed and pre-wrapped sandwiches. If sandwiches are served, have bread, meats, cheeses, condiments on platters, or have pre-made sandwiches on open platters, not pre-wrapped and boxed. If lunches must be pre-made, use paper bags. Paper boxes are wasteful even though they are recyclable.
8. **Serve food on trays that are reusable rather disposable.** This may require the caterer to pick up the trays after the event. If you must use disposable trays, be sure they can go into recycling containers. Also, consider offering them to staff to take home, wash and reuse.
9. **Give away leftovers:** Arrange with a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen to pick up any remaining edible food, or donate to a department on campus. Notify hungry students using <http://twitter.com/#!/FreeFoodatMbay> or <http://groups.google.com/group/ucsf-free-food?lnk=srg>.
10. **No balloons:** Please, no balloons, not even biodegradable ones!! Order re-usable banners. Balloons returning to the land or sea can be mistaken for prey and eaten by animals.
11. **No latex:** Some healthcare workers are allergic to latex. Be sure all food is prepped with non-latex gloves.