



Don't even sink about it

Managing waste in your food business

The simple tips in this fact sheet will help you meet your trade waste requirements, and make your business more sustainable. They'll also help protect the community from wastewater overflows, creating a better life for the people of Greater Sydney. Never use your sink as a garbage bin. Place solid waste like food scraps in the bin and recycle liquid waste such as cooking oils. There's a lot you can do to avoid or reduce the amount of waste you create.

How can you avoid producing waste?

- Be creative with your menu. Develop dishes that use all of each ingredient, rather than sending useful food to waste. This will also save you money on ingredients.
- Offer tap water, rather than bottled water to customers to reduce plastic waste.
- If your restaurant has its own garden, consider composting vegetable scraps to close the nutrient cycle. You'll reduce waste, grow better produce and save money on fertilisers.
- Encourage the doggy bag! If customers take their leftovers home, it's that much less waste to deal with. Use compostable, biodegradable or re-useable take-out containers.
- Put any waste you do produce into the garbage bin or compost – **never** into the sink.

How can you reduce the amount of waste produced?

- Buy local, seasonal ingredients – they'll be at their best and fresher, and you'll have more time to use them before they go off. You'll also be supporting your local suppliers, who may support your business in return.
- Even if service is busy, discourage staff from putting plates with leftovers straight into the sink or dishwasher. Scrape plates into the bin and dry wipe. If you must pre-rinse before washing, use a water-efficient spray rinse valve.
- Use as little detergent as possible. Detergents breakdown fats, oils and grease, giving you shiny plates, pots and pans. But if you use too much, they interfere with your grease trap. If you buy less detergent, you'll save money!

- Have bins handy for coffee grounds and tea leaves and add them to food scraps for composting or place them in the bin. One sustainable option is to place them back into the bags they came in and offer them to customers who are keen gardeners to take home for compost.
- Wipe or sweep spills – don't hose them into drains. This will not only save water, but prevent greasy food waste from entering the wastewater system.
- Follow our requirements for in-sink and in-floor waste bucket traps in all sinks and floor wastes in kitchen and food preparation areas and maintain your equipment. To learn more, see [sydneywater.com.au/greasetraps](https://www.sydneywater.com.au/greasetraps).
- Maintain your treatment equipment to prevent greasy waste being discharged to our systems and the environment. Make sure your grease trap is pumped out and cleaned by your Wastesafe contractor to the schedule in your Sydney Water agreement.
- Please contact us before buying new treatment equipment. Make sure to check the equipment against our listed suppliers of pre-treatment equipment for food businesses on our website.



You must have bucket traps in sink and floor drains in commercial kitchens.



Scrape your plates into the bin or compost - never into the sink.

How can you re-use resources rather than dispose of them?

- Quiet night? Leftover ingredients already prepped? Don't throw it away. Consider sending these to charity organisations who provide meals for the less fortunate.
- Probably the most common 're-use' in food businesses is oil from deep fryers. The Australian Institute of Food Safety, says deep fryer oil should be filtered every couple of days and changed at least weekly, but there's no hard and fast rule. It depends on what sort of cooking oil you use, how many hours you use it for and how often during each service, at what temperature, and how clean your equipment is. If you do re-use oil, filter it regularly and check for changes in smell, colour, viscosity, frothing, smoking and ultimately the taste of your food. It's about finding the balance between cooking great food that's safe and healthy and being financially and environmentally sustainable.

How can you recycle waste?

- When it's time to replace used cooking oil, collect it and store it in sealed containers in a bunded area ready for your recycler to collect. Many recycling companies will supply containers for you to fill so they can remove the oils and recycle it off-site.

If you only have very small quantities of waste oil, you can pour it into a sealed container and put it in the bin, but never pour used cooking oil into the sink or direct into your grease trap.

Commit to sustainability

To achieve real results, consider all the impacts of your business decisions and actions. Think about how you can avoid or reduce waste, how you can use resources better, considering re-use and recycling. If all else fails – think about how you can dispose of waste safely and economically.

- Discuss sustainability with your staff and get them involved. Set targets to reduce waste and brainstorm with staff how you might do this. Educate new staff about how to handle waste as part of their training.
- Share your commitment with your customers on social media and promote your progress, whether it's water savings, waste avoided or just that you're happy to be helping your community.
- If you need new equipment, consider maintenance, water and energy costs over the life of the item. You may find the lowest priced item is not always the cheapest. Always talk to us before buying treatment equipment to make sure the equipment is compatible with our system. You don't want to buy expensive equipment only to find you can't connect it.
- Make monitoring and managing waste produced part of the business processes. Understand how much waste you're producing overall and how much waste you produce per cover.
- Understand the water and wastewater services you're connected to, how any treatment equipment (like a grease trap) works and assess how the decisions you make affect the community around you.



Reduce plastic waste by serving tap water.



Where you put it makes a real difference