

Special Event Waste Management Requirements 500+

Updated November 21, 2025

A waste management plan is required as part of the city Special Event permit process for events that have more than 500 staff and attendees. The Recycling and Solid Waste Division will review the plan to ensure the amount of service at the event complies with State and local laws, it is sufficient to keep the event space clear of overflow and that containers for all required waste streams are easily accessible.

The waste plan is a package of four items. It includes 1) A cover sheet, 2) the City's Waste Plan form, 3) a map of the event space showing the location of waste containers and 4) proof of service such as a hauler agreement. **Plans are due 30 days before the event. All four items must be submitted together. Plans will be rejected if anything is missing.** Information on all these items is in this document.

City staff are happy to meet with organizers in advance of the waste plan submission to answer questions. Contact us at wastecompliance@cityofsacramento.org.

Requirements for Events for 500+ People

Event organizers with a combined attendance, including staff, vendors and volunteers, of 500+ are required to submit a Waste Management Plan form, provided by the City. The plan must describe actions that will be implemented to reduce waste and to manage the three waste streams: garbage, recycling, and organics (food waste).

Requirements for Events for 2,000+ People

In addition to the requirements for a 500+ event, organizers of 2,000+ events, that charge admission, must provide a Post-Event Diversion Report detailing the diversion efforts implemented by the event and the disposal and diversion tonnage data of the waste generated at the event. The Post-Event Diversion report is due within 60 days of the event's conclusion. The City will send the Post-Event Diversion Report form before your event.

Handling Three Waste Streams & Service Options

All events must have garbage and recycling services and waste containers for both streams must be co-located at the event. Events that have food, either sold, provided for free, or brought in by attendees, are required to have organics service and organics containers must be placed along with garbage and recycling containers wherever food is sold or consumed.

As part of the Waste Plan, organizers will need to indicate the service options they are using for each waste stream and provide proof of service as described in the table below.

Service Options		
Service Provider	Waste Streams	Description
Private Franchise Hauler service	Garbage Recycling Organics	This is the most common option for event producers. Work with one of the franchised haulers that provide event services. The haulers can provide dumpsters as well as smaller containers to place within the event space.
Third Party/Self-haul	Recycling	Some organizations may collect and sort recycling for the CRV benefit. For events of 2,000+, using an alternative service or self-hauling of recycling may require the organizers to track the weight of all the recycling they handle. Self-haul to a residence is never allowed.
Back-haul	Garbage Recycling Organics	Back-hauling of garbage, recycling, or organics will only be allowed under controlled circumstances. Examples would include an event where a business that is producing the event is also located at the site, such as Oktoberfest or St. Patrick's Day event at a restaurant and the adjoining street is closed. Back-haul to a residence is never allowed.

Proof of Service	
Service Provider	Description
Private Franchise Hauler service	A signed service agreement/proof of arranged service with a commercial waste hauler
Third-Party Recycling Service/Self-haul	Confirmation email, contract, or invoice from Third-party. Or Self-Haul, email that includes name and location of the Recycling Center
Back-haul	Address of business and contact.

Contracting for Waste Collection Services

A list of private franchised waste haulers allowed to operate in the City can be found here:

<https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/public-works/recycling-solid-waste/Commercialwasteservices/commercial-collection-services>

Container Placement, Colors & Signage Requirements

Containers for garbage, recycling, and organics must be conveniently located and accessible to all event attendees, staff, and contractors and co-located.

- Garbage and recycling are mandatory at all events
- Containers for the collection of organic waste must be placed in all areas where food is prepared, served, and consumed. Organics containers must be co-located with garbage and recycle containers.

- There must be enough containers placed around the event site to accommodate the waste generated.
- All waste containers at the event must comply with the State's signage and color mandates
 - The signs must indicate the type of material that is collected (ex. "Recycling") **and**, state either in text or graphics, the primary accepted materials and materials not accepted.
 - The signs must follow the State-required container colors: black or gray for garbage, blue for recycling, and green or brown for organics.
- Regardless of who provides the container or waste services – signage is always required.

If you are using a private waste hauler, they can provide signs, or you can design your own to depict the materials that will be generated at your event for easier sorting. If you create your own signs, check with your hauler to confirm what they can and cannot accept in each container. The city has generic signs available on its website: <https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/public-works/recycling-solid-waste/Commercialwasteservices/SpecialEventwaste>. Another sign resource is CalRecycle at <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial/organics/prtoolkit/>

Collection Practices

The event permit holder is solely responsible for:

- Arranging for collection services sufficient for the type and size of the event
- Placement of the containers at the event
- Event staffing to manage the waste
- Servicing containers during an event with sufficient frequency to avoid overflow
- Replacing of container bags during the event
- Keeping containers unobstructed for the franchised waste hauler to service
- Removal of all containers following completion of the event

Food Vendors & Trucks

On-site food vendors are responsible for maintaining a debris-free area around their food vending site; providing their customers with appropriate receptacles to separate their solid waste, recyclables, and organic waste; and pick-up any debris in their surrounding area prior to departing.

Food trucks are required to provide their own receptacles for garbage, recycling, and organics next to their trucks for customers to use.

Although food vendors are required to have garbage recycling and organic receptacles at their vending site, event organizers are still responsible for providing organic and recycling containers for the event as a whole.

Runs & Walks

Event organizers of special events that are runs or walks need to have appropriate waste receptacles at their hydration stations if they are on City property or in the public-right-of-way. The containers must be removed within two hours of the run or walk passing through that area.

Parades and Marches The City reserves the right to require the placement and number of containers along a route based on the event.

Enforcement

Failure to meet the requirements of special event waste management as outlined in this guide, which is based on Sacramento City Code 13.24.460, may lead to a permit not being issued for the special event; not allowing a permit to be issued to the event organizer for any subsequent event and/or citations with possible fines attached. The City reserves the right to inspect any event site for compliance with Sacramento City Code 13.24.460.

Questions?

Please contact the Recycling and Solid Waste Division, Commercial Waste Compliance team at wastecompliance@cityofsacramento.org or (916) 808-4846.