

A New Approach to Party Time

It's a great time of the year: It's party time for post-prom, graduation, the end of the school year, outdoor picnics and neighborhood BBQs. The only challenge with these fun events is that in our efforts to make them hassle-free, we often end up with a big pile of trash – a big hassle for our limited natural resources. So how do we reduce the amount of unnecessary waste without sacrificing fun and convenience? Host a Zero Waste event! Eco-Cycle's made it easy with our new Zero Waste Event Kit (ZWEK), a do-it-yourself kit to help you create and host your very own Zero Waste event, just in time for the party season.

If you attended the Lions' Club Pancake Breakfast last year at Broomfield Days, you got a taste of what a Zero Waste event is like. You probably noticed that just about everything that morning was either reusable, recyclable or compostable and there were no trash cans in sight, only Zero Waste stations set up to collect recyclable and compostable materials. Event organizers partnered with Eco-Cycle to put forethought into what the 600 or so attendees would be using and consuming at the event. At the end of the event, they were able to recycle and compost 97% of the materials, saving water, trees, greenhouse gases, and preventing pollution.

Using the ZWEK, your party can boast the same great environmental savings, whether your invite list includes 25 or 150 people. The first step is to figure out what types of foods and drinks you will be serving and the number of guests attending so you can create a ZWEK custom-made for your needs. Go to www.ecocycle.org and select the specific items and quantities you'll need. All products available in the kit are made from recycled paper, plant starch, or sugarcane and are fully compostable in a commercial composting facility. They replace the traditional plastic plates and utensils you've purchased before which are made from non-renewable petroleum and may never biodegrade. The list of products available includes: compostable hot and/or cold liquid cups, compostable plates and bowls, compostable cutlery, and paper napkins made of 100% post-consumer recycled paper. You'll also receive a collection container for your compostables, a "bio-bag" to line the compost bin, as well as complete instructions and colorful guidelines to affix to your recycling and compost bins.

It will be very important to let your guests know they are attending a Zero Waste party. You can let them know about your Zero Waste commitment by including a message about it on your invitation (suggested wording is included in the kit) and by posting provided signage on tables, at your entryway, by the food and beverages, etc.

Make sure to remove the trash cans from your event, since there will be no need for them! After the last straggler has gone home and you toast yourself for throwing a successful Zero Waste party, take your compostable collection container to the Eco-Cycle Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) in Boulder (see a map at www.ecocycle.org) and deposit your compostable liner bag directly into the "compostables" bin. Your compostable materials will be taken to a local composting facility where they will be turned into a nutrient-rich soil amendment. If you have regular

curbside collection, you may put your recyclable commingled containers out at the curb, or you can take them with you to any Eco-Cycle location to be recycled.

Detailed Zero Waste party planning and how to order the ZWEK info can be found online at www.ecocycle.org/zwevents. Depending on your needs, the kit costs between \$15-20/per 25 guests, with a maximum of up to 150 guests per order. You'll need to account for three full business days for Eco-Cycle to fill your order. Once you receive an email confirmation, you can pick up your kit at the CHaRM. Pre-packaged kits (not custom ordered) are available at both our Longmont and Broomfield drop-off centers. Happy Zero Waste partying!

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