



ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR FOOD SERVICE WARE

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance for food service ware only is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. Additional contextual information, as well as supplementary recommendations for food and beverage purchases, solid waste recycling, oil and grease recycling, use of disposable products, food donations, waste audits, procedures, and training, is provided here to assist in the implementation of the specification. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, [click here](#).



BENEFITS

91

Metric tons of greenhouse gases avoided each year if the District composted 100 tons of food waste instead of disposing at the landfill

Which is the equivalent of taking **19** cars off the road

SOURCES

www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/tools/warm/index.html

<https://www.epa.gov/climateleadership/simplified-ghg-emissions-calculator>

Scope

The environmental specification addresses food service ware (containers, cutlery, cups, straws, plates, trays, napkins, paper towels, and dishware) or any services that involve the use of food service ware.

COPY AND PASTE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATION LANGUAGE INTO THE REQUIREMENTS SECTION OF YOUR STATEMENT OF WORK

EPPS Requirements

Food service ware and related services purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below.

Products and services shall be certified under the following ecolabel:

- Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified compostable



Supplementary Recommendations (continued)

Use of Disposable Products

Expanded polystyrene packaging and cups shall not be used.

Full-service operations shall not use disposable or single-use utensils or serving ware; an exception may be permitted for takeaway food, for dining areas that do not have a functioning dishwasher onsite, or when reusable items may pose a safety hazard for the specific populations being served.

Full-service operations shall not use disposable or single-use utensils or serving ware; an exception may be permitted for takeaway food, for dining areas that do not have a functioning dishwasher onsite, or when reusable items may pose a safety hazard for the specific populations being served.

All Disposable Foodservice Ware designed for onsite use and disposal shall be aligned with the waste, recycling, and composting programs and policies of the facility and be in compliance with the Sustainable DC Omnibus Act of 2014 which goes into effect on January 1, 2017 and the Sustainable Solid Waste Management Amendment Act of 2014.

All Disposable Foodservice Ware designed for off-site use and disposal shall be recyclable or compostable or made with recycled content and be in compliance with the Sustainable DC Omnibus Act of 2014 when it goes into effect on January 1, 2017 and the Sustainable Solid Waste Management Amendment Act of 2014.

Compostable packaging shall be third party certified through the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) to meet one of the following standards:

- ASTM D6400: Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics (www.astm.org/Standards/D6400.htm)
- ASTM D6868: Standard Specification for Biodegradable Plastics Used as Coatings on Paper and Other Compostable Substrates (www.astm.org/Standards/D6868.htm)

Recyclable packaging shall be made of materials that can be recycled using the District's recycling collection program.

Disposable napkins, utensils, and straws shall be available upon request or from self-serve dispensers, where applicable.

Condiments shall be available through self-serve dispensers, where applicable. Individual-use packets may be provided upon request or distributed when populations being served have restricted or limited mobility, such as the elderly or handicapped.

The Contractor shall not purchase waxed cardboard packaging for use in operations, unless it is accepted by a local composting service.

Transport packaging, or packaging used to carry food from the location at which it has been prepared to another location, shall be reusable, rather than single-use.

Disposable paper products (excluding sanitary paper) shall be environmentally preferable, and meet the requirements set forth in the [Paper](#) specification.

Disposable carryout bags shall meet the material and labeling requirements in 57 DCR 7208, 7209; Sections 21-1002 and 21-1006 (<http://dcrules.elaws.us/dcmr/21-1002>).

Food Donation

Food that is suitable for consumption but will not be served to target populations shall be donated, where local food donation programs are available and liability concerns can be addressed. The contractor shall establish guidelines to determine the suitability of food to be donated for human and animal consumption and shall be in compliance with DC's municipal regulations for food and food operations (DCMR 25-A). Priority shall be given to donations for human consumption, followed by animal feed.



Supplementary Recommendations (continued)

Waste Audit

The Contractor shall set a goal for reducing food waste, and conduct quarterly waste audits of total pre-consumer waste. The amounts and types of pre-consumer waste shall be recorded over at least three days of normal operation, and then normalized to the contractor's cost or weight of food purchases or other mutually agreed upon measure. Examples of appropriate methods may include recording the weight, number, or volumes of bags either through measurement performed by the contractor or through collecting data supplied by the hauler.

These results shall be compared to the data from previous audits and tracked over time.

The Contractor also shall support the District in conducting more detailed audits as requested from time to time through sorting, storing, and labeling bags or containers of waste, recyclables, and compostables following instructions provided by the District.

Purchasing of Dry Cleaning Services

Linen and uniforms shall be cleaned without perchloroethylene, where practicable.

Cleaning Supplies and Procedures

The Contractor shall follow the requirements set forth in the [Cleaning Supplies](#) specification when purchasing cleaning supplies.

The Contractor shall follow all applicable procedures set forth in the [Janitorial Services](#) specification.

Purchasing Appliances or Equipment

For a contractor required to purchase appliances, the Contractor shall follow the requirements set for in the [Appliances](#) specification.

For a contractor responsible for maintaining and purchasing water fixtures, the Contractor shall purchase those fixtures labeled by EPA's WaterSense program or have flow rates that do not exceed those specified by WaterSense.

For a contractor responsible for purchasing and maintaining lighting, the Contractor shall install ENERGY STAR certified light bulbs and light fixtures, where practical.

Water and Energy Conservation Checklists

The Contractor shall maintain a checklist of all tasks necessary to conserve water and energy, and a schedule for performing each task.

The Water Checklist shall address at least the following, as applicable:

- a. Turn off faucets when not in use.
- b. Regularly check for leaks and repair them.
- c. Maintain toilets and urinals.
- d. Do not use running water to defrost items or melt ice in sinks.
- e. Hand-scrape dishes before loading into the dishwasher.
- f. Operate dishwashers when full, when possible.
- g. Avoid spraying or hosing floors with water: use dry cleaning methods followed by damp mopping and give preference to spot cleaning when wet cleaning methods are required.
- h. Set dishwasher temperature to the lowest temperature allowed by health regulations and consistent with the type of sanitizing system used.



Supplementary Recommendations (continued)

The Energy Checklist shall address at least the following, as applicable:

- a. Perform and document maintenance of appliances as recommended by the manufacturer, if applicable.
- b. Set thermostats to cool at 85°F or to heat at 62°F during non-operating hours, if applicable. If this is not feasible, temperatures during non-operating hours shall be set as close as possible to the temperatures specified above.
- c. Set hot water heaters in accordance with the minimum or recommended supply temperature for the facility's dishwaters. In the absence of a dishwasher, water temperature shall be set in accordance with minimum health code requirements.
- d. Monitor refrigerator and freezer temperatures.

Employee Training

The Contractor shall train all employees on the operating procedures, whether written or unwritten, that are needed in order to conform to this specification.

These procedures shall be reviewed for relevance, feasibility, and effectiveness during annual training, and updated as necessary.

New hires shall be trained in these procedures as part of their initial training.

Solid Waste Recycling

The contractor shall assist the District in recycling all types of materials for which recycling is available through the proper sorting of recyclables from compostable items and waste. Recyclable items shall align with those accepted by the facility's waste, recycling, and composting programs.

Composting

Contractors shall support the District in implementing composting programs through proper sorting of waste, recyclables, and compostable items which include food waste.



Background Information



The supplemental recommendations in this document are based on [Green Seal's](#) Restaurant and Food Services standard ([GS-55](#)), adapted for the District's procurement context. Green Seal is a non-profit standard-setting organization certifying a range of products and services. Green Seal conducts scientific testing and on-site audits to verify that products meet recognized standards. GS-55 was released in 2014 but subsequently withdrawn; thus, the associated practices are presented as optional additional recommendations, rather than part of the required environmental specification.



[ENERGY STAR](#) is a voluntary program run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy. Among other efforts, ENERGY STAR certifies products that demonstrate through third-party testing in EPA-recognized laboratories that they meet specific energy use criteria. Certified products are allowed to use the ENERGY STAR label. Information about ENERGY STAR certified lighting can be found at: www.energystar.gov/?c=lighting.pr_lighting_landing.



The [Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\)](#) is an independent non-profit organization that establishes standards for sustainable fishing, performs outreach to fisheries and businesses, and educates consumers on sustainable practices. MSC ensures that MSC-labeled seafood comes from, and can be traced back to, a sustainable fishery.



This specification requires that compostable packaging is [Biodegradable Product Institute \(BPI\)](#) - certified to meet the ASTM D6400 (compostable plastics) or the ASTM D868 (plastics used in paper coatings) standards. This means that the products have been independently tested and verified to decompose in industrial or municipal facilities without leaving behind harmful toxics or plastic residues.



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [WaterSense](#) is a partnership program helps consumers make smart water choices that save money and maintain high environmental standards without compromising performance. WaterSense-labeled products have been certified to be at least 20% more efficient than conventional products without sacrificing performance.



The [Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch](#) raises awareness on sustainable fishing through its guide program, which provides science-based and peer-reviewed seafood recommendations for restaurants, distributors, purveyors, and consumers. The Seafood Watch guide identifies seafood items that are "Best Choices" or "Good Alternatives", and those to "Avoid."

Expanded polystyrene, sometimes referred to as **Styrofoam** or **foam**, is a material that cannot be composted or readily recycled and contributes to pollution of the Anacostia River. The [Sustainable DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014](#) bans its use effective January 1, 2016.



Environmental Hotspots The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL Compostable food service ware will reduce the quantity of disposable food service ware sent to landfills; methane emissions from organic decomposition in landfills are a significant source of GHG emissions.

Significance to the District

SUSTAINABLE DC PLAN This specification prohibits use of expanded polystyrene and requires procurement of local foods which supports meeting [Sustainable DC Plan](#) Waste Action 1.3 and Food Action 3.6.

LEGISLATION [Healthy Schools Act of 2010](#) requires the procurement of local foods. [Sustainable DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014](#) prohibits use of expanded polystyrene and requires Disposable Foodservice Ware to be compostable or recyclable by January 1, 2017. [Sustainable Solid Waste Management Amendment Act of 2014](#) requires solid waste to be separated at the point of discard into recyclables, compostables, and trash and states that the District shall follow the solid waste management hierarchy to the maximum extent practical. [Retail Establishment Carryout Bags Disposable Carryout Bag Material and Labeling Requirements](#) includes material and labeling requirements for disposable carryout bags.

LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&M [LEED v4 EBOM. LEED's Materials and Resources: "Purchasing – ongoing" credit](#) requires at least 60% of total purchases of ongoing consumables (by cost) meet at least one of several criteria, which include postconsumer recycled content requirements and local sourcing of [food and beverages](#), and seafood certified by the Marine Stewardship Council.

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <https://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing-program> or call the OCP Procurement Center of Excellence at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477) or email sppdc@dc.gov.