



# Greening Your Event at Champlain College

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Adapted from *Greening Events on the UVM Campus: An Exploration*, by Melissa Martin, Senior Thesis, Environmental Program, 2006. [http://www.uvm.edu/~recycle/Students/Greening\\_Events\\_Thesis\\_Part2.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/~recycle/Students/Greening_Events_Thesis_Part2.pdf)

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## What are Green Events?

A green event is any event that seeks to reduce and or mitigate negative environmental impacts through the use of various means, including recycling and waste management, energy efficiency, and the use of local and organic foods.

## Why Green Your Event at Champlain?

As the collective negative human impact on the environment has increased, Champlain College, among many other institutions and communities, has strengthened efforts toward more sustainable lifestyles. Although Champlain has undertaken greening efforts in numerous areas of campus, special events—

those in which people temporarily congregate, such as meetings and conferences—have often gone under the radar.

Whether your event is large or small, efforts to reduce its negative environmental impact will significantly help the college as a whole to do the same. Special events are great opportunities to educate participants on the importance of the greening effort and can provide tactile opportunities to portray Champlain's philosophy on campus sustainability.

The strategies presented in this manual can be altered to fit the size of your gathering, be it a large orientation barbecue or a small department meeting. Additionally, the presence of recycling containers, compost bins, and other green products and strategies will not necessarily detract from the look of your event. Higher-end events may choose to use washable dining ware and staff to clear food, drinks, and other wastes to be sorted behind the scene. Guests coming into the Champlain College community, as well as those within it, expect a degree of environmental awareness and associated activities.

**Note:** The following sections are not an exhaustive list- new ideas, products, and methods of achieving more sustainable lifestyles continue to arise with time and experience.

## Pre-Event

Before the day of your event, take time to set your environmental goals and priorities. Use these as a base for greening efforts within your event. Also, consider the context of the event itself. For example, if the event is related to solid waste, focus on setting a goal of zero-waste. Even if you do not achieve your goal, any step taken to reach it can be seen as an improvement and a place to work from if and when organizing another event. Once your goals are set, assess previous attempts to green the event if it was held in the past. Look for areas that posed challenges, as well as areas that worked well. Also look for any changes in the upcoming event from previous years. Is it larger? In a different location? and so on.

### **If this is the first, second, third, fourth, fifth....time the event is being held:**

- Assess types and amounts of materials to be generated
- What services are in place? (i.e. recycling)
- Where will participants be traveling from? How long will they be staying?
- What services will be needed?
- Gain support from any departments whose services may be needed.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue to discuss potential greening efforts and opportunities. Remember, in some cases departments may not have experience with particular requests.
- Inform participants prior to the event about greening efforts that may take place.
- If necessary, recruit and train volunteers (or hire as many as possible).
- As known on many college campuses, students are easily recruited by the incentive of a free meal, admission to the event, or t-shirt.
- Solicit help from the Champlain College Environmental Club or other organizations on campus.

**Note:** Often, if items and services are not requested by you, the organizer, they may not be provided. Organic foods and recycle bins are just two such examples. This same concept applies to communicating your goals and ideas to offices and departments that you may be working with.

## Site Selection

Because the impacts of energy and water consumption are predetermined for most event spaces on campus, site selection can play an important role in reducing your event's environmental impact.

### When selecting a site for your event...

- Look into hosting outdoors
- If it is a small gathering, meeting outdoors may require no energy consumption unless transportation, audio visual services, and or dining services are needed.
- If indoors, look for naturally lit spaces as to reduce energy consumption from lighting.
- Time of day is an important factor for naturally lit spaces.
- To reduce energy consumption, be sure to turn lights out when leaving the event space (when applicable).
- If available and controllable, look for spaces with natural air flow to reduce the need for air conditioning.
- Look for spaces that make recycling accessible.
- If requesting catering, try to choose an event site that has the option of washable dishware.
- For the most part, any space at Champlain is within a short walking distance from CCTA bus stops.

## Transportation

Transportation related to a conference, meeting, or other event has the potential to be the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions than any other activity associated with your gathering. Although the majority of events on campus are attended by those residing locally and by those who choose to walk or bike, conferences and other such large events attract guests from across the region and the country. The priorities of greening transportation are minimizing the production of emissions and most efficiently using transport that cannot be avoided.

- Request that attendees walk, bike, or ride public transportation.
- If a car is needed to arrive on campus, request that all other transport while on campus be done by walking, biking, or through the bus systems.
- Provide an avenue for ride sharing.
- In pre-event literature, suggest carpooling for any attendees that are traveling by car. It may also be possible to attach a ride share thread to e-mails and or to the web page for the event.
- When attendees are not familiar with Champlain College and Burlington transportation systems and bike routes, provide information and route maps in pre-event literature, as well as during the event.
- At times when guests may want to go to the downtown areas, suggest ways to get there without driving (walk, bike, bus).
- Champlain may be able to arrange a shuttle system for your event needs, if and when other modes of public transport are unavailable.
- If participants are staying overnight, suggest hotel accommodations within walking distance or near mass transit systems.

Suggest hotels within the Burlington area that have good environmental policies. Examples of designated Green Hotels by the Vermont Business Environmental Partnership include:

- 254 South Union Street Guesthouse, Burlington
- Anchorage Inn, South Burlington
- Doubletree Hotel, Burlington
- Green Mountain Suites Hotel, South Burlington
- Lang House Bed and Breakfast, Burlington
- Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center, Burlington
- Willard Street Inn, Burlington

For more information visit [www.vtgreenhotels.org](http://www.vtgreenhotels.org)

Provide information and opportunities for attendees to off-set their carbon emissions.

- For larger events, there may be time and energy to devote to your own carbon initiative. By calculating the travel done by all participants, a carbon footprint for the event can be calculated. Set up an area to provide information on the issues of carbon emissions and climate change and to collect funds for those willing to offset their emissions. These funds can then be invested in carbon-reducing sustainable development projects.
  - Numerous organizations provide opportunities over the internet to calculate and off-set one's own carbon emissions, including:
    - CarbonFund.org at [www.carbonfund.org](http://www.carbonfund.org)
    - Climate Care at [www.jpmorganclimatecare.com/us/](http://www.jpmorganclimatecare.com/us/)
    - The Carbon Neutral Company at [www.carbonneutral.com](http://www.carbonneutral.com)

## Waste Reduction

The easiest and most effective way to deal with waste is to not create it in the first place. In addition to saving natural resources, preventing wastes will reduce costs for you and the college and will eliminate the need for further energy consumption due to processing, such as recycling and or disposal. Wastes produced at Champlain College are sent to various places to be recycled or buried. Solid waste is sent to the landfill in Coventry, Vermont.

*Disposal of wastes contribute to numerous environmental impacts on natural areas, contribute to ground and surface water pollution and air pollution from transport of wastes.*

Prior to your event, set a goal for reducing the amount of solid waste the event will generate. It can be possible to strive for a zero-waste event, in which no waste is destined for the landfill. If pursuing this goal, only provide recycling and compost (if applicable) bins. Also alert guests to the goal and suggest a carry-in, carry-out policy for any wastes that cannot be recycled.

### **In order to reduce wastes generated...**

- Determine materials needed at the event and consider ways to reduce the amount used.
- Eliminate duplicate addresses from mailing lists. This will reduce the amount of paper used.
- Use the web and or e-mail (if and when possible) for all "mailings," announcements, and copies of paperwork to be handed out during the event.
- Require all printed materials to be double-sided.
- If it is necessary to print out materials, make copies for attendees by request or limit copies to registered (if applicable) attendees only.

- Also consider the design of any printed materials. Is there a way to reduce the space or amount of pages used? For example look for headings or margins that can be reduced in size.
- Communicate all requests for reducing paper and waste to any speakers and or event guests that may be handing out printed materials.
- If possible, **reuse** signs, name tag holders, and other supplies from previous events, campus activities, or other gatherings.
- Limit and or eliminate “giveaways.”
- Eliminate packaging and throw-aways.

See *Catering* and *Procurement* sections for more ways to reduce wastes.

## Recycling

If the event is held indoors, proper recycling receptacles should be in place. If the event is outdoors, you should request to have appropriate bins delivered for use during the event.

### Recycling at Your Event...

- Be sure that all trash bins are accompanied by recycling bins. There should never be a trash area without a recycling option.
- Recycling locations should be highly visible and containers well labeled.
- Try to place recycling stations in convenient areas for attendees to encourage a higher rate of participation.
- Inform participants about and encourage them to make use of recycling areas before, during, and towards the end of the event. Even if it is a small department meeting, gently remind attendees about nearby recycling bins.
- When holding a larger event, staff all recycling stations to remove contaminants and provide attendees with information. A “floater” may also work well if there is not enough staff to cover all locations.
- If appropriate, make recycling fun through the use of games and incentives.

## Composting

Champlain currently offers pre and post-consumer composting in the main dining hall. Food waste collected at Champlain College goes directly to the Intervale Compost to be processed and eventually sold. If you are serving food as part of your event, you can request to have compost containers located with trash and recycling.

### Composting at Your Event...

- Make use of trained staff/ volunteers to provide attendees with information and to minimize contamination.
- Be sure to communicate your efforts with catering staff, guests, and any other departments that may be involved (i.e. Events Team).
- Encourage attendees to properly sort their waste through announcements and staff/volunteers.
- Table signs explaining the process of composting may also help increase involvement.
- Use bins that are visually different from trash receptacles and labeled clearly.

- Accompany trash and recycle bins with a compost bin. Just like recycling, this will provide a convenient way to maximize positive results.
- If compost bins are not currently available from Conference & Event Services/Catering, you may contact Chittenden Solid Waste District to borrow bins for your event (See Appendix A).

### **Do Compost**

- Any food leftovers
- coffee grinds/ tea bags
- paper napkins
- compostable serveware (cups, plates, bowls)
- liquids

### **Do NOT Compost**

- Paper cups, plates, and bowls (most are lined with wax or plastic) *unless specifically told that your serveware is compostable*
- Dishes or Silverware
- Coffee creamers or stirrers
- Styrofoam or Plastic

## **Catering**

When holding an event on campus and choosing to provide food, you will need to contact the Catering department of Dining Services. Champlain dining services strives purchases both local and organic foods when financially and seasonally feasible. Organic foods must often be requested. Champlain dining services is more than willing to work with you, the customer, to fulfill your requests. As with all other areas of your event, maintain communication with this department.

### **Food and Drink:**

- Take a careful head count of attendees to properly order and to reduce the preparation of unnecessary meals.
- Request local and or organic foods and beverages.
- VT products are widely available.
- Choose items that are in season to reduce impacts of transportation.
- Choose foods that can be eaten with only a need for a napkin, reducing unnecessary serveware.
- Choose meals which do not contain meat products. If meat must be served, request free-range, organic, or prairie-raised options.
- Avoid serving individual water bottles.
- The best option is to use bulk beverages and washable cups.
- Request bulk condiments and other food items to reduce the need for packaging.
- If serving coffee, request that cream and sugar are served in reusable pitchers and bowls.

### **Serveware:**

- Whenever possible, choose to use washable/reusable serveware. China may be requested if the event is held in a location in which facilities exist.
- If washable is not an option, request compostable serveware or items that can be recycled.
- Consider selling or providing reusable beverage containers.

- Request cloth napkins. If unavailable, request compostable paper napkins.

## Procurement

Procurement of goods and services is an integral aspect of greening your event. Procurement applies to all aspects of events including catering, event materials, and waste management. For all events make an effort to find needed materials that already exist on campus. Reusing things such as name tags, boards, decorations, and props will eliminate the cost of purchasing new products and the environmental costs it takes to produce them. Renting items may also be an option.

### If Purchasing Is Necessary...

- Buy in bulk to reduce the need for packaging.
- Try to eliminate packaging altogether.
- Purchase local goods and services. Keeping it local will reduce the environmental effects of transportation and associated processing, and will benefit the local economy.
- Purchase reusable products.
- Choose items that can be recycled on-site.
- When containers are necessary, as with single-use beverage containers, use recyclable containers.
- Try compostable containers, but only if compost collection bins are available. Otherwise, all items will just wind up going to the landfill.
- Choose unbleached and or chlorine-free products.

### Closing the Loop

Choosing to purchase products containing recovered materials is a fundamental aspect in a recycling program. Purchasing products made partially or wholly from recycled materials closes the loop in the recycling system through creating a market for recycled goods. Many products are available at comparable prices to those made with virgin materials. Often there are two types of recycled content materials to choose from- pre-consumer and post-consumer. Although both are made from recycled content, pre-consumer content is that which includes by-products from the manufacturing process, but has never gone out to the consumer and therefore recycled by the manufacturer. Post-consumer, however, is that which is made of materials that have gone out to the market, been used, and then collected for recycling.

- The higher the recycled content percentage, the better.
- Making recycled paper, as opposed to paper made from virgin fiber, uses 64% less energy and 58% less water.
- Buying pre- or post- consumer products reduces the solid waste going into the waste stream and to the landfill.

# Green Your Event!

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## A Simple Checklist

Greening your campus event will help to reduce the environmental impacts of energy, waste, and transport and may reduce costs for you. Greening your event can be as simple as following these steps.

- Is your event location in a naturally lit area?
  - This will help to reduce energy consumption from lighting.
- Review the materials needed for your event.
  - Are there any that can be eliminated?
  - Try to eliminate all packaging.
  - Can you find those materials on campus?
  - Look to borrow or rent supplies.
  - If you need to purchase materials, try to buy those made from post-consumer recycled content.
- Reduce the amount of paper used.
  - Make use of the internet and email for all pre-event notifications and literature.
  - If printing is necessary make sure it's double sided and on high recycled-content paper.
- Request that all attendees make use of alternative modes of transport for all transportation needs when commuting to and from, as well as within campus.
  - Champlain and the greater Burlington area is hugely accessible to pedestrians and those choosing to bike.
  - Our public transit systems can likewise, get you anywhere in town.
- Remember to request recycle bins and compost bins as necessary.
- Serving food?
  - Request seasonal, local, or organic varieties.
  - Request bulk items if serving beverages or condiments.
  - Look into composting.
  - Request washable or compostable serviceware.

# Appendix A

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## CSWD Free Event Recycling Loaner Program



### **Compost Container (13 gallons)**

Norseman Plastics [www.norsemanplastics.com/html/norseman\\_environmental\\_products.html#Organics](http://www.norsemanplastics.com/html/norseman_environmental_products.html#Organics)

### **Recycling Container (52 gallons)**

Iowa Rotocast Plastics <http://www.irpinc.com/>

If you have questions please contact Michele Morris, CSWD Business Outreach Coordinator, at (802) 872-8100 x237 or [mmorris@cswd.net](mailto:mmorris@cswd.net).