



A Waste Solutions Guide: **Recycling and Reducing Food Waste in Multi-Family Accommodation Properties**



Background

Whistler has a mission to achieve zero waste. As a community with strong sustainability goals, organizations across the community have been working together to improve the ways in which waste material is managed.

In 2016, the Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment, with support from a Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) Community Enrichment grant, implemented a community pilot project to test a variety of waste segregation tools in multi-family accommodation properties. This guide was developed using findings from the pilot, drawing upon input from local strata management companies and ongoing discussions with community stakeholders. The goal is to equip people managing multi-family accommodation properties with the knowledge and tools to help Whistler become a zero waste community.

Using This Guide

This guide is intended to support the implementation of new or updated waste management systems in multi-family accommodation properties of 12 or more units. This guide is intended for use by:

- Strata Management Company Staff
- Property Rental Company Staff
- Property Strata Councils

The guide also provides a support tool to those seeking to champion changes in properties where they reside or for strata properties with less than 12 units.

Companion Tools to this Guide

This guide can be used in conjunction with a suite of tools intended to support unit occupants. These tools are accessible to download for free and include:

- A template letter to unit occupants outlining changes to community and property waste management and the steps that unit occupants need to take to support these changes.
- An information flyer that provides tips on composting for unit occupants.
- Bin signage kits that can be produced as stickers, posters or flyers and provided to unit residents to aid in the correct segregation of waste within accommodation units.



Companion tools to this guide are available for
FREE download at whistler.ca/wastereduction

Why Continually Improving Waste Management is Important

The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) is committed to reducing solid waste and diverting recyclable and compostable material out of the garbage sent to landfill, through steps outlined in Whistler's Solid Waste Management Strategy. A 2014 waste audit showed the multi-family accommodation and commercial sector accounted for 64 per cent of waste Whistler sent to landfill. Another audit of commercial and strata garbage found that 54 per cent of the garbage stream could have been diverted for composting. An additional 13 per cent could have been recycled, 11 per cent was construction waste and only 22 per cent of garbage sent to landfill was actually classified as garbage.

In an effort to prevent food scrap, organic and recyclable materials from ending up in the landfill, the RMOW updated the Solid Waste Bylaw, requiring all multi-family accommodation, Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) and single-family properties to collect and divert organic and recyclable waste from garbage.

The updated bylaw means that multi-family accommodation properties are required to:

- Collect and divert food waste and recyclables from garbage
- Provide multi-stream waste collection on site
- Manage contamination of each waste stream to ensure items are being disposed of correctly



(Source: City of Vancouver)

Why Multi-Family Accommodation and Commercial Property Waste Data is Collective

In Whistler, especially in high-density core areas, many properties contain both multi-family accommodation and commercial units. In mixed-use properties, business and accommodation units may share garbage rooms and accommodations may be zoned for residential or rental use. Introducing new waste management systems will require thoughtful communication, ongoing monitoring and a multi-pronged approach to ensure all unit users are involved.



For the latest information on Whistler's waste management – including bylaw updates, and tools to support changes to infrastructure, systems and training, visit whistler.ca/wastereduction

Everyone living in, visiting or doing business in Whistler creates waste, so reducing and diverting waste from landfill makes sense for everyone. Improving solid waste separation supports a community shift towards shared zero waste goals and benefits all parts of society:

Economic Impacts

The costs associated with the collection, transportation and processing of waste are rising and this trend is expected to continue. Tipping fees are paid by private waste removal companies, often referred to as “waste haulers”. Understanding tipping fees can help to identify the financial incentives for keeping recyclable and organic materials out of the garbage. In 2017 -

- The tipping fee for garbage increased from \$130 to \$140 per tonne.
- The tipping fee for mixed waste – garbage containing more than 25% recyclable materials, clean wood, organics or yard waste – increased from \$260 to \$300 per tonne, which is more than double the cost of uncontaminated garbage.
- The cost of organic remained at \$75 per tonne, nearly half the cost of garbage.
- Tipping fees for recyclable materials including glass, rigid and film plastic, paper, cardboard and metals continue to be covered through extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs.

Businesses and properties that reduce waste better position themselves to decrease waste management costs over the long term.

Social Impacts

Whistler’s annual Community Life Survey show strong support for waste reduction goals in the community, consistent with the Whistler 2020 goal of continued community action towards a zero waste future.

- Recycling initiatives became mainstream after education programs were rolled out in schools. Teaching people of all ages about waste creates greater awareness of natural resources and the opportunities to conserve.
- Green actions show a community commitment to a greener future, which can help to empower residents and guests to further personal actions.
- There are now more green jobs than resource extraction jobs in BC. These jobs support a shared transition to a more sustainable and resilient society.

Environmental Impacts

Some people believe that food will simply decompose once in landfill, but this is not true. Diverting organic waste from garbage has many ecological benefits, including:

- Reducing methane emissions, a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than CO₂.
- Minimizing the formation of leachate, a toxic runoff which threatens ground and surface water.
- Returning nutrients to soil, which both improves soil health and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Boosts the ability of soil to retain water and decreases runoff.



Implementing Organics and Recycling Collection Programs

In Multi-Family Accommodation Properties

There are many mixed-use properties in Whistler and the waste from commercial and multi-family accommodations often varies. While this guide is primarily intended to aid managers of accommodation properties, the five steps outlined as a process for launching or updating waste systems can also be applied in properties with commercial functions.



The RMOW has provided a targeted set of tools for commercial properties. Download them for **FREE download** at whistler.ca/wastereduction

Step 1: Assess Communal Waste Collection and Garbage Room Spaces

If garbage room space and budget allow, expanding your waste collection to include organics can be as simple as calling the properties waste hauler and updating service contracts. The quantity and size of waste bins, and the frequency of collection should reflect the volume of waste being generated by a property. If space is limited, consider servicing bins more frequently.

Use existing waste collection data to plan for future needs. Review past collection service invoices to understand past collection frequencies, costs and seasonal fluctuations. In some cases, waste haulers provide waste weight data. Waste haulers apply additional charges when bins are overflowing, and when waste is left on floors or on top of bins. Regular communication with contracted waste haulers helps to ensure the service provided continually serves the properties' needs. Contact hauler service providers early in the planning process to ensure any spaces being designed or retrofitted can be accessed safely by collection vehicles – consideration needs to be given for height clearances, turning radius, driver sight lines and conditions under which bins would be moved manually.

For properties that need to retro-fit old spaces or build new ones use the process flow chart on page 6 to identify, which steps to work through. A design guide has been produced by the RMOW for those planning to build new garbage room, which highlights the building requirements needed to ensure functionality.



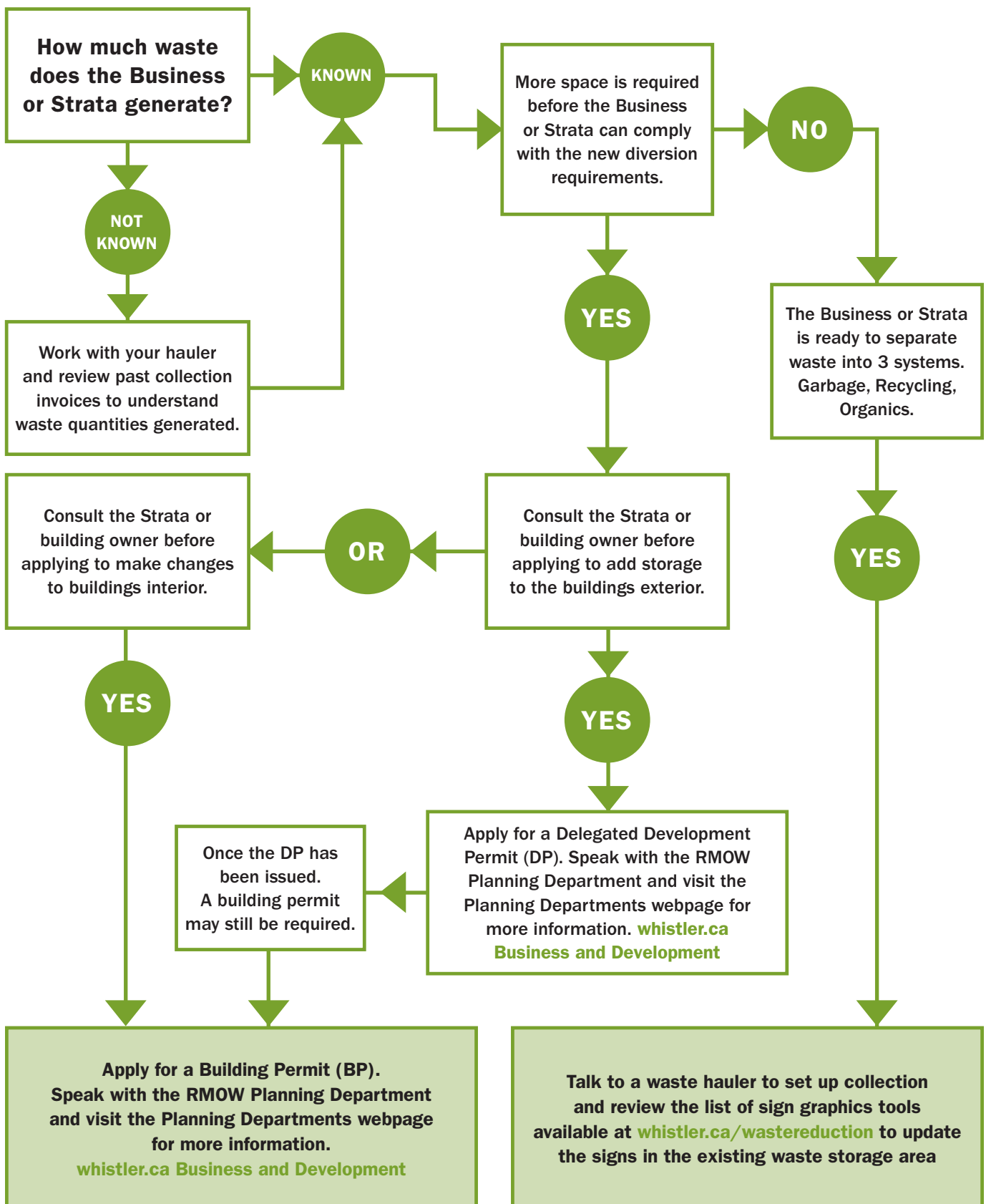
Points to Bear in Mind when Sorting Waste

For the safety of people and wildlife, Whistler's bylaws require all properties and businesses to 'put all garbage and recycling in wildlife-proof containers or enclosures'.

Vancouver Coastal Health's Guidelines on Solid Waste requires that waste 'must be handled, stored and removed in a sanitary manner and picked up as often as necessary to prevent an accumulation, or attract pests'.

The RMOW Building Code requires that waste be collected regularly and that combustible materials including waste paper, cardboard and plastic, and non-combustible materials such as glass and metallic containers be separated from the remainder of the building by a fire separation and that the area be covered by water sprinklers.

Consider the following first steps when planning to revise waste collection programs:



Step 2: Engage and Educate Property Users

It is important to understand the variety of users in a property. The type of unit use will determine the approach needed to engage and educate all unit occupants and property users about new waste management systems. The users may be made up entirely or be a mix of the following:

		Information on the Solid Waste Bylaw.	Information on any changes needed to garbage room structure or size.	Breakdown of initial and ongoing budget implications.	Overview of roll-out strategy & tools that will be used to support unit users.	Information on why keeping organic and recyclable materials out of landfill is important.	Guidance on what changes may be needed within units and by unit users.	Guidance on waste streams collected and garbage room location.	Detailed information on how to identify material types (recycling logos, detailed 'accepted' lists.
Unit Owners	Owners may reside in the unit full-time, part-time or not at all. Owners will need to be supported to understand new waste bylaw requirements and the steps the property must take to prepare for compliance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Long-term Accommodation Users	With long-term ties to the property this user group represents one of the easiest to engage in revised waste systems.	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mid-term Accommodation Users	Seasonal and annual unit occupants come from all over the world and need to be communicated with upon moving into a unit to provide understanding of the importance of managing waste responsibly - to avoid attracting wildlife and support shared zero waste goals.	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short-term Accommodation users	Staying for a night, a week or up to a month this user group has no prior knowledge of property and in-unit waste systems. These users may only go to the garbage room on the last day of their stay (or not at all in some cases), therefore it is important that users can easily identify how to correctly sort waste from within their rental unit.							✓	✓
Commercial Users	Mixed-use spaces are common throughout Whistler with accommodation and commercial users sharing garbage rooms. It is important to engage commercial users who have the opportunity to integrate education and checks on waste, to ensure correct segregation and minimize contamination, into staff training and daily checklists.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Third-party Users	All users of a property have the potential to impact the success of the waste collection program. Examples of other users might be: unit rental companies; cleaning services providers; or event planners.					✓	✓	✓	✓

Consider how best to connect with each user group for communications and on-going education around waste management. Options include:

Strata Council Meeting Minutes, Annual General Meeting Package, Letter / Mailed information, Notices in common areas, Posters and information flyers, Information in tenancy contracts, Requirements in service contracts with third-party users, Through new / existing infrastructure (signage in garbage rooms or on bins)

Prepare building residents for the instalment of ‘food scraps and organics’ collection well in advance by providing notices of key dates and details of changes that will be occurring, educational materials and if available, in-unit kitchen catchers.

Share information through newsletters, committees, strata council meetings, bulletin boards or share information door to door. Consider making information and educational materials readily available in the building’s lobby or garbage room if the building sees a high turnover in tenants and short-term renters.



Download Educational Materials for tenants at whistler.ca/wastereduction



Prepare to Answer these Common Questions

What about SMELL?

In accommodation units – there are lots of tips to keep food scrap bins fresh, such as lining bins with newspaper or freezing smelly items. Share these tips found in the downloadable tenants tools to help mitigate concerns and aid in the programs success.

In the garbage room – keep waste in shaded areas, line organics bins, increase the frequency of collection as needed, ask waste haulers to wash or replace bins.

What about wildlife, such as BEARS and RODENTS?

Diverting food scraps doesn’t create more waste it just involves separating waste differently. Bears, rodents and other wildlife can smell organic waste whether it is in the garbage or organic bin. All garbage rooms are required to be wildlife-proof by keeping doors and bin lids down. Consider adding a seal to the bottom of the garbage room door to keep rodents out.

A list of frequently asked questions relating to waste has been produced by the RMOW and is available at whistler.ca/wastereduction

Skip the Garburator

Disposing of food waste in a garburator uses excess water, electricity and adds problem materials, such as suspended solids, oils and grease to wastewater. Garburators are not considered a sustainable way to manage organic waste. Encourage composting of food scraps and organics instead.



Step 3: Set up Shared Spaces

Set a program launch date that works for both the building occupants and the waste hauler. Ensure educational tools, signage and bins are installed at a similar time.



Garbage Room Set Up

Keeping garbage rooms clean, tidy and well-lit ensures occupants are comfortable taking the time to sort waste correctly and sets the expectation that waste should be disposed of responsibly. While waste haulers will frequently switch out soiled bins for clean ones, additional services such as power washing of the garbage rooms can be scheduled at an additional cost. When preparing to set up for a new system consider refreshing the garbage room with fresh paint or a power-wash. Ensure bins are easily accessible for both the user and the hauler.

Install Consistent Signage

Waste signage is being standardized throughout the Squamish Lillooet Regional District and into Vancouver. Using consistent signage helps people to successfully sort waste in public spaces, at local waste depots, in the home and at work.

Clear, image-based signs have been created in a variety of formats, which can be used to as bin labels, waste room signage or posters – the signs are free to download and using them can save time and money.



Sample Signage



Download Bin and Garbage Room Signage at whistler.ca/wastereduction

Install similar systems throughout communal areas in a property to ensure consistency and to promote familiarity.

Consider the Use of Liners

Most properties choose to control the type of liners their tenants use in the organics bins to avoid common contaminants, such as plastic. First, determine whether the waste hauler accepts compostable liners, as some haulers do not due to ongoing confusion between compostable and non-compostable plastics, difficulty in identifying material type once it is in the compost, as well as processing challenges.

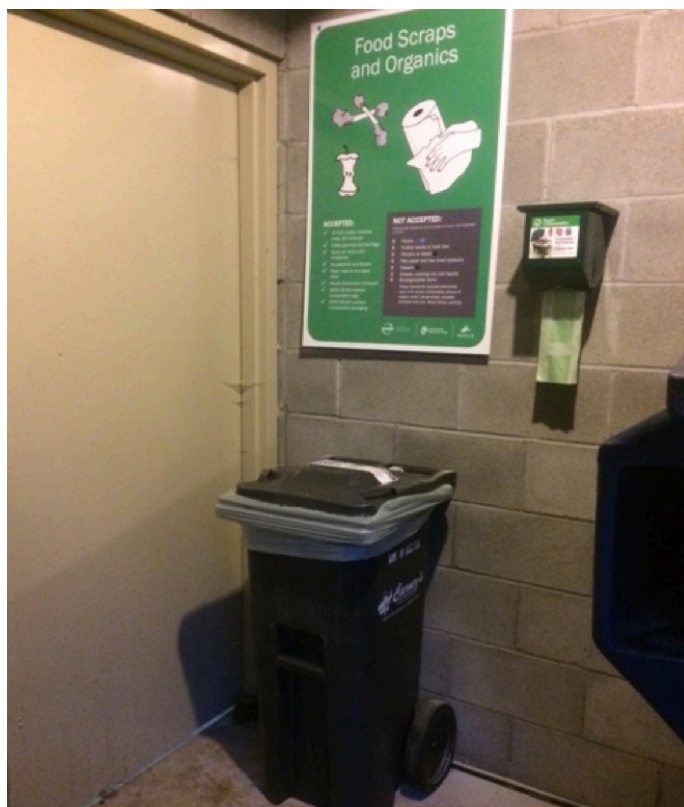
Consider designating an area beside the bin for old newspapers, paper bags or if accepted by the building's waste hauler provide a dispenser with ASTM D6400 compostable bin liners.

DID YOU KNOW?

Compostable and biodegradable are not the same thing. All compostable items biodegrade, but not all biodegradable items can be composted. We know, it's confusing!

Biodegradable plastics break down into smaller pieces of plastic that make them very challenging to remove from the environment. Whereas compostable plastics break down into organic material.

As compostable plastics need to be heated to a high temperature for a consistent period of time to break down, not all compost facilities are able to process them. If accepted by the waste hauler, make sure to read labels carefully and look for ASTM D6400 or BPI certified compostable products to keep polluting plastics out of our soil, waterways, food and bodies.



Step 4: Launch the Food Scraps Collection Program

Remind property users that their 'food scraps and organics' collection is active. Post notices in common areas and in garbage rooms. Continue to direct property users to useful resources that they can download or review online. In properties with a high proportion of rental units it will be necessary to continually refresh education materials.

Consider Your Tools For Launch

In 2016 the Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment (AWARE) worked with three identical strata accommodation properties in Whistler's Upper Village to test a variety of in-unit recycling toolkits. The toolkits varied in cost and the effort needed to install - ranging from printed education materials that could be mailed, to pictorial colour-coded bin labeling kits, to ready-to-install under the sink waste collection bins.

Waste audits showed that recycling and organics collection was significantly more successful when occupants were provided with bin labeling kits or the under-sink collection toolkits. Surveys showed that occupants were significantly more satisfied with the support provided to help them prepare for new waste practices when provided with the full under the sink bin kit.



'Literature Toolkit':
Educational materials on
waste streams collected.
\$5.00 per unit



'Stickers and Literature Toolkit':
'Literature Toolkit'
plus stickers for bins.
\$10.00 - \$15.00 per unit



'Full Bin Toolkit':
'Literature Toolkit'
plus stickered bins.
\$20.00 - \$60.00 per unit



Full findings and links to download the toolkits developed from the 2016 Accommodation Strata Waste Pilot are available on AWARE's website.
www.awarewhistler.org/project/strata-waste-pilot

The pilot project was funded through a RMOW Community Enrichment grant.

Step 5: Plan to Continually Monitor and Engage Property Users

Use visual checks and ongoing communication with property waste haulers to understand what is working well with new waste collections and potential areas for improvement. To keep waste diversion on track, plan to continually re-share and re-educate property users. Understanding how to connect with the various users in a property will be important, in some cases e-mailed information will work, in others posting information in shared spaces will be more appropriate. Consider installing a white board in the garbage room where information surrounding contaminants can be provided for tenants or where tenants can ask item specific questions.

Provide written information to new tenants and existing residents on an annual / biannual basis explaining how to separate and deposit garbage, recyclables and organics into the appropriate receptacles to ensure the building is in compliance with the Solid Waste Bylaw.

Waste guides and tools for accommodation properties are hosted by the RMOW on a centralized webpage where audiences can find the information catered to their property type.



Access and Download Waste Educational Materials at whistler.ca/wastereduction

Love this place. Reduce your waste.

Food isn't garbage. It belongs in the organics bin.

REDUCE	RESCUE	RECYCLE
Reduction is the key to good waste management. Review portion sizes, plate waste and stock controls for opportunities to reduce food waste.	Consider options for saving food from spoiling. Can it be frozen, canned, vacuum sealed, etc? Donate locally to the Food Bank or the Freed Food Society.	Food that goes into the organics bin is recycled into compost used locally to enrich soil for landscaping, community gardens and Pemberton farms.

YES PLEASE

- ✓ **ALL FOOD WASTE**
Fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, seafood, shellfish, bones, pasta, bakery items, cheese and eggshells.
- ✓ **FOOD-SOILED PAPER**
Napkins, paper towels, tea bags, coffee, grounds/filters and heavily soiled pizza boxes.
- ✓ **PLANTS**
Tree trimmings, flowers, leaves, grass, brush and weeds. No invasive species.
- ✓ **OTHER**
ASTM D6400 certified compostable bags. Wood stir sticks and chopsticks.

NO THANKS

- X Liquids, grease, cooking oil
- X Conventional to-go containers and disposable cups
- X Plastic or styrofoam
- X Glass
- X Metal
- X Wax Paper
- X Waxed Cardboard
- X Rubber bands and twist ties
- X Stickers
- X Diapers
- X Biodegradable items, unless labeled compostable and ASTM D6400 certified

www.whistler.ca/wastereductiontools

AWARE Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment

WHISTLER



A Solutions Guide: Recycling and Reducing Food Waste in Commercial Properties

Resort Municipality of Whistler
whistler.ca



