

Reusable cups and crockery considerations

Using a cup, plate or cutlery more than once helps to eliminate waste and prevent litter, as well as reduce the associated cost and logistics to service bins and skips. However, going reusable has its own list of considerations and costs, so what are they and how can they be addressed?

MAKING AN INFORMED DECISION

Some events go reusable by introducing a cup library stocked with second-hand cups. Other bigger events purchase thousands of cups and crockery items for continual use. To decide what is feasible at your event it is important to consider the:

- Type of glass and crockery:
 - Know what type of reusables you could invest in – retailers can help with this decision to make sure it is catered to your set-up (access to services and washing method) and event size
- Number of items:
 - Know the number of reusables needed
 - Estimate volume and weight of waste generated in single use options vs. reusable options
- Services available to your event site:
 - If you have power and plumbing, you can consider a glassware washer or all purpose dishwasher
 - If you don't have access to sewage you can consider a greywater tank set up
 - If you don't have access to power, you can consider a soaking and handwashing set up. Refer to COVID-19 protocols to ensure all OHS measures can be adhered to
- Reoccurrence of your event:
 - Cost savings over time of capital expenditure invested in buying crockery
 - Operational cost of renting crockery
- Logistics that would be required:
 - Distribute reusable to points of sales
 - Collect ideas in a safe and practical way.

How to think about cost and cost saving

- Calculate your current cost for the 'single use option'
- Calculate the cost of buying single use items and servicing the disposal of them over 5 years
- Calculate the cost of buying single use items for stallholders – and increase their fee to provide the reusable service to them, just below the cost of their single use items
- Budget the cost of buying and using reusables for 5 years
- Budget the cost of renting and using reusables for 5 years
- Compare the results from the calculations and budgets to inform your decision on reusables.

BUYING RESUSABLES PROS AND CONS	RENTING RESUSABLES PROS AND CONS
<p>PROS: You don't have to pay for transport and you have the capacity to use the products over time, perhaps even rent them out to others.</p> <p>CONS: You will need adequate storage and a dishwashing set-up.</p>	<p>PROS: You don't need the capital expenditure or space for storage.</p> <p>CONS: You will need access to staff, expertise and other services such as dishwashing.</p>

WASHING AND DRYING METHODS

The requirement of a washing system is that each item is sanitised and remains so until it reaches the hands of the patron. There are two ways that sanitation can be achieved through:

- Heat usually by the use of glassware washers or dishwashers. A cycle is required to reach above 65.6°C. While you can sanitise manually (at 77°C for over 30 seconds) it tends to be unsafe and unpractical
- Food grade sanitiser, which requires every item to be:
 - Cleaned by hand to remove particles and dirt
 - Submerged in a solution for approximately 15 minutes (this will depend on the product)
 - Potentially rinsed (this will depend on the product)
 - Air dried.

Air drying can pose a real challenge for larger events and having a large area and sufficient towels/paper towels to allow for safe rotation is likely to be required.

KEY QUESTIONS TO PLAN YOUR WASHING

- How many drinks/serves of food are likely to be sold?
- How many washes will this translate into?
- How much water is required both in and out?
- How much power is required?
- How many staff is required?

BACK-UP PLAN

It's a good idea to have a back-up plan if the dishwashing system fails or you run out of reusables, which may include:

- Access to extra reusable cups and crockery
- Access to single use compostable packaging
- Extra volunteers to increase the speed of dishwashing.