



QUICK GUIDE FOR RESTAURANT OWNERS AND MANAGERS

Three Mandatory Criteria:

1. No expanded polystyrene foam use (aka Styrofoam).

Any to-go container option is better for the ocean than expanded polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam). While we tend to recommend using paper and cardboard options, they may not work in all situations. The first of the three R's of conservation is to REDUCE so finding ways to create less waste and embracing reusable items whenever possible should be a top goal because they can also lead to cost savings.

2. Proper recycling practices are followed.

Proper recycling helps to ensure that items don't get littered and are diverted from the landfill to live a second life as something new. If you offer any items in glass bottles or aluminum cans please provide a recycling container that is easily visible for customers. Ensure that cardboard and any other delivery packaging are recycled. Most cities and states have recycling mandates so please check with your municipality and/or waste hauler for any local requirements.

3. Water Conservation: restaurants can help address clean water issues by utilizing at least one of these three options:

A) Conserving water in drought areas can help reduce the perceived demand for expensive and harmful ocean desalination. Providing water to customers only upon request is a simple action to take. Installing low flow faucets and toilets if possible can further help to conserve water. Click here for more detailed suggestions:

<https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/conservation/waterwork/checklist-restaurant.html>

B) Conserving water to help reduce urban runoff. Make it a company policy to use a broom, rather than a hose, to clear sidewalks, driveways, loading docks and parking lots. If more intense cleaning is needed, try spot cleaning with a bucket and brush instead of power washing and capturing the water. Note that many municipalities prohibit restaurants from using any cleaning process for outside areas that generates urban runoff. Click here for more detailed suggestions: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/conservation/waterwork/checklist-restaurant.html>

C) Conserving water and reducing sewage spills as part of proper handling of fats, oils, and greases (FOG). When poured down the drain, FOG hardens inside sewer pipes, constricting wastewater flow and clogging the pipes. This can lead to sewer overflows that can potentially reach the ocean. Additionally, it can take extra water to attempt to 'flush' FOG down the drain. Make it a priority to follow your local requirements for a grease trap and FOG management. Click here for an example from San Francisco:

<http://sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=480>

PLUS, choose at least 3 of the following criteria:

4. Plastic straws are provided only upon request.

By asking people to opt-in for a straw rather than automatically handing them out or placing them in drinks you can help to reduce the number of plastic straws found at beach cleanups.

5. Only reusable tableware is used for onsite dining and utensils for to-go food are provided only upon request.

Not everyone who gets food to-go needs disposable utensils. Some people may be taking the food home while some people may carry utensils in their backpack or car. This is another example where simply asking people to opt-in can help reduce the use of disposable items.

6. No beverages sold in plastic bottles.

Plastic bottles are another top-ten item collected at beach cleanups, especially in states that do not have a bottle recycling law that requires a deposit on bottles and cans. If individual containers are needed, glass bottles and aluminum cans are both more Ocean Friendly options.

7. Discount offered for customers with reusable cup, mug, bag, etc.

Choose to reuse! By offering a small discount for customers that bring their own coffee mug, drink cup, or reusable bag you can start to build a loyal following with your conservation practices. Reusable items are the holy grail of retail conservation and can make the biggest impact for a clean beach and ocean.

8. No plastic bags offered for takeout or to-go orders.

Plastic bags are the #2 threat to ocean wildlife behind derelict fishing gear. If you need to provide a bag to customers, please make it a paper bag and/or start a reusable bag program.

9. Organic, local, and/or vegetarian/vegan food options are offered on a regular basis. All seafood must be a 'Best Choice' or 'Good Alternative' as defined by Seafood Watch.

Organic food reduces the need for pesticides and other chemicals, which can drain into waterways and the ocean. Local food reduces the carbon footprint of your meal since it spends less miles traveling in a truck. Offering vegetarian and vegan food options can reduce the impact of climate change, rainforest destruction, and pollution, while saving water and other precious resources. (<http://www.chooseveg.com/environment>)

Surfrider Foundation is a strong supporter of marine protected areas to increase fish abundance and diversity in the ocean so why not in the restaurant also? The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program is the most respected list of recommendations to help you choose seafood that's fished or farmed in ways that have less impact on the environment. (<http://www.seafoodwatch.org/>)

10. Energy efficiency efforts are implemented where possible.

Climate change is already impacting the coastline and lowering your carbon footprint by saving energy can help to lessen the impacts. Restaurants are the most energy intensive commercial buildings in the United States according to the Energy Information Administration. There are a number of options for energy and cost savings for both equipment and lighting. Click here for more details and ideas: <http://www.sustainablefoodservice.com/cat/energy-efficiency.htm>