

Litter prevention checklist

Your guide to litter-free events



Organising an event?

Start your litter prevention planning here

When a large group of people gets together, there's going to be waste. If it's an organised event, you can put in a plan to manage and even prevent waste beforehand, to help stop it becoming a litter problem later.

This guide is for anyone organising an event, on private land or in a public space. It might be a street party, sporting event or charity fundraiser in the park. It could also be a live music or arts festival, large or small, indoor or outdoor, and lasting from a few hours to a number of days.

Whose responsibility is it anyway?

If you're the organiser, it's yours, and one you need to take seriously. But you can enlist others to help you out. For example, your food and drink suppliers could be your litter prevention advocates by encouraging their customers to dispose of their waste properly. With good communications and clearly marked litter points, using the bins will be easier and more intuitive for attendees.

You need to make sure waste at your event is collected, stored, recycled and disposed of correctly. You're also responsible for litter – or rather, for making sure the area is litter-free when you leave. Managing waste effectively means preventing litter effectively. And preventing litter will save you money in clean-up costs.

What is this litter?

It could be food and drink containers, cigarette waste and food waste itself, ticket stubs, leaflets or other giveaways. An event that involves overnight visitors staying on site has the potential for an even greater variety of waste, and litter.

There might be opportunities to reuse and recycle some types of waste, in addition to stopping it becoming litter in the first place. And as the organiser, you may be able to cut the amount of potential waste your event generates. For example, if you run a paperless event, you can entirely remove the potential for tickets, site maps and flyers from becoming litter in the first place.

Work with a waste management specialist

They should be able to help you decide how you're going to approach litter prevention. Bins will be a major part of this. Ask them for guidance about:

- **Having enough bins** – overflowing bins encourage more littering.
- **Getting the right type of bins** – making it easy for attendees to separate their waste.
- **The right size of bin** – too small and they could overflow quickly.
- **Bin locations** – in the right hot spots to encourage their use.

- **Bin labelling** – making it clear what type of waste goes in each.

- **Specialist bins** – designed for commonly littered items like cigarette butts, chewing gum and coffee cups.

- **Waste storage** – unless waste is removed from site immediately after bins are emptied.

Just like you, your waste contractor has to comply with waste regulations. They might refuse (or charge you more) to remove recyclables if they're contaminated. So it's in your best interest to separate waste, and littered waste, effectively.



Get your litter prevention message out there



Make sure your staff and any suppliers (for example, your food operators) are on board, know where the bins are and what can go in each one. Ask them to be proactive, approaching attendees to see if they need any help, including pointing out the waste facilities. Volunteers may be able to do this, perhaps in exchange for free entry to your event.

If you can, make waste facilities big, bright and bold – the more visible they are, the easier it will be for people to find them. You might also consider adding a bit of fun – a litter prevention mascot who's available for selfies, a random prize for retweets of your litter prevention message, or even an a cappella group with some songs about litter.

Remember to let attendees know you're aiming for a litter-free event – ask them for their help in making this happen. If you have an event map, show where the bins are, and spell out what's recyclable and what's not.

At the event:

- **Make bins accessible and visible** – with hard-to-miss signs that guide attendees to them.
- **Mark your bins clearly** – using pictures and colour coding. There's free marketing material to help you do this on the.
- **Put general and recycling bins together** – to cut down the chances of people putting their waste in the wrong place.
- **Check bins regularly** – and empty them quickly when they're full.

LITTER PREVENTION MESSAGE

Communication resources

The Zero Waste Scotland litter prevention toolkit contains free artwork for litter prevention communications that you can adapt to suit your event.

Go paperless, reusable, recyclable and compostable

These days, many people see paper as a nuisance. Nobody wants to carry it around with them. What can you do to cut down on paper, and other easily littered items, on your event site? Here are a few ideas:

- **Ticketless entry** – digital tickets are becoming the norm.
- **Avoid handouts** – get all your marketing, registration information, agenda and other information online.
- **Get tough with takeaway suppliers** – insist on reusable or recyclable, or easily compostable, food and drink containers. Ask them only to provide packaging which is absolutely necessary.
- **Sell reusable drinks containers** – like bottles, beer mugs and cups, or offer a buy back scheme.
- **Use bulk and refillable containers** – fiddly items like individually wrapped single-use packets of sauces, vinegar, sugar and salt are easy to litter accidentally.



Use incentives to promote litter prevention

Sometimes the chance of even a small reward is enough to change the habits of litterers.

The Hebcelt Festival piloted a simple recycle and reward project in 2013. Festival goers were invited to recycle plastic bottles, aluminium cans and some drinks cups. **170 lucky recyclers** were randomly awarded a prize, ranging from drinks vouchers to an iPad.



THE RESULT























75%

of recyclable items, over the three-day festival, were returned, saving the organisers time and money in clearing up and separating waste.



The checklist

The checklist covers the key decisions and key actions at each stage of your event. Just tick each activity off once it's completed.

Preparation		At the event		Litter & waste prevention	
1	 Appoint a waste collector <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	 Brief all staff and suppliers on: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	 Digital tickets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	 How many bins do we need, and what type? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		 Bin locations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	 Online marketing, registration and programme information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	 What size of bins do we need? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		 Bin use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	 Confirm catering suppliers will provide recyclable or compostable containers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	 Where will bins be located? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		 Emptying procedures <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	 Organise bulk and refillable containers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	 Do we need any specialist bins? (Cigarettes/gum, drinks cups etc.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	 Check bins are accessible and visible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	 Organise reusable cups and containers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	 Where will waste be stored? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	 Check bins are clearly signposted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
7	 Will we use incentives? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	 Check bins are clearly labelled <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
8	 Prepare pre-event litter prevention messaging. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	 Group different bin types together <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
		6	 Prepare and issue rota for checking bin fill levels and train staff how to use them <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		