

NEAT EVENT!

An environmental guide for event organizers



This guide is meant to provide advice and help to event organizers on how to handle environmental issues.
The guide was created as part of the Helsinki metropolitan area's joint Greening Events project (2/2012–6/2014).



Contents:

Event locations	5
Transport and logistics.....	6
Acquisitions	9
Energy.....	11
Food and drink.....	12
Noise	16
Waste management	19
Environmental communications..	23



What's happening near you

Thousands of events are organised in the capital region, and we can even talk about event industry. Finland has even been called “the promised land of events”, because, considering our population, we have an unusually large amount of events of all sizes. The participation in and organisation of events is a significant part of the lives of Finnish people, and it also forms a major branch of business.

Events have many positive effects: they offer jobs, support local economies and tourism, as well as improving the urban culture and sense of community. They also increase social interaction and leisure activities, thereby improving the quality of life of people.

At the same time, events can have significant environmental effects, which, however, can be minimized by thinking ahead.

The following cause environmental impacts in connection with events:

- Traffic
- Use of materials
- Energy consumption
- Water consumption
- Food and drink
- Noise
- Soil erosion
- Wastewater
- Waste
- Hazardous waste

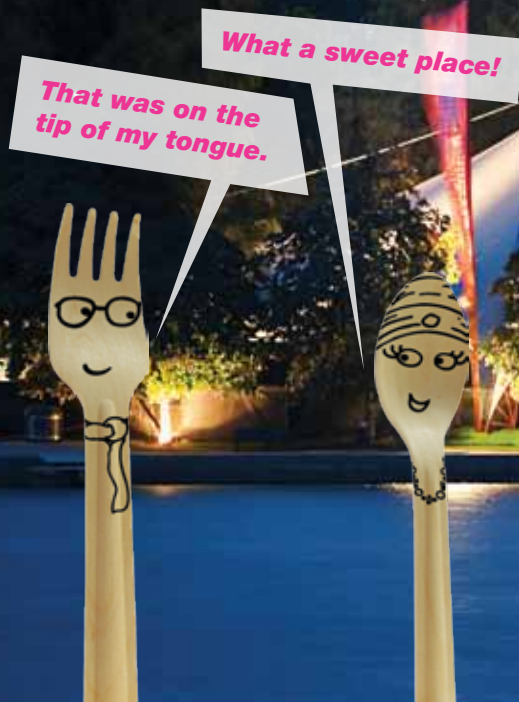
Even though events can place a burden on the environment, they can also increase positive thinking about and awareness of environmental issues.

Events are important to us. That is why it is extremely important to decrease their environmental impacts and to organize them according to the principles of sustainable development. This way, we can ensure the availability of events that enrich our lives even in the future.

The day with the most events in Finland in 2013 was July 6th, with a whopping total of 666 events.

Source: <http://tapahtumainfo.fi/tilasto.php>.

**"NEAT PLACE,
NEAT EVENT!"**



EVENT LOCATION

Let's organize events in smart locations, and keep the locations tidy. In the long run, that's best for everyone. The environmental management of an event starts with choosing the location.

In all events:

- Select a location that is easily accessible.
- Select a location with sufficient foundations for the event.

In indoor events:

- Select a venue that uses an environmental management system or programme, or that has an environmental management certificate (e.g. EcoCompass).

In outdoor events:

- Plan the use of the event location together with the person responsible for managing the area.

Tips:

- Ensure that the event does not contaminate the soil, vulnerable vegetation, or waters in the area.
- In the common areas, assemble all structures using removable mountings, not wedges.
- In events where heavy vehicles are used, follow any weight limitations. Heavy vehicles cannot be used on soft surfaces.

- Protect vulnerable areas using fences, for example. Sometimes, it may be best to block all access to areas where large crowds may cause stress to the environment.
- Monitor soil erosion. Hard rain may make the ground muddy, and grass may be trampled badly. In this case, guide the crowd and other operations that may spoil the soft surface to other areas.
- Ensure that the subcontractors, food vendors, and employees do not pour anything unsuitable, such as fuel or cooking oil, onto the ground or into the water.
- In addition to the waste management during the event, ensure that the area is properly cleaned afterwards. Don't forget to take care of the cleanliness of the area affected by the event.
- Ensure that no potentially harmful substances are spilled onto the ground or into the water.
- Should the event cause any harm to the natural or green areas, ensure that they are properly restored. Any damaged areas must be restored and the restorations accepted by the city maintenance unit.



July is the month that brings the most waste to Helsinki. Typical waste types in parks, beaches and streets include various packaging materials and cigarette butts.

TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

Efficiency is essential for organizing logistics.

Good logistics are beneficial for the environment, as well as for your budget for the event.

Tips for transport:

- Select a location that is within easy reach, particularly considering walking, biking, and public transport.
- In all communications and actions, encourage people to walk, cycle, or use public transport.
- Offer safe parking areas for bikes.
- Instruct the visitors to use public transport by offering maps and schedules, for example. You can also include a link to the Journey Planner (www.reittipias.fi/en).
- Offer tickets for public transport as part of the entrance fee to the event.
- In order to decrease the use of private cars, do not offer parking free of charge.
- Charge different parking fees according to the usage capacity of the cars, in order to encourage as many people to arrive in the same car as possible.
- If the public transport connections are not sufficient, organize separate buses or trains to the event.
- Inform the Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) in good time about the event (infra@hsl.fi). If necessary, HSL can organize extra vehicles to run during the event.
- When organizing conferences, find out about the possibility for discounts or free tickets for the participants on the HSL website. Please note that free and discount tickets must be applied for at least four months before the event.
- Organize a possibility for virtual participation in the event, if necessary. Today, many conferences are recorded on video and broadcast online.

Materials, such as structures, waste containers, toilets, and generators, must always be brought to the event location, and services and catering must be organized. There are many ways to minimize the environmental effects of the transportation of materials.

Tips for the transportation of goods and materials:

- Use new transportation vehicles with low emissions.
- Instruct the drivers in economic driving, which will also bring savings in fuel costs.
- Avoid unnecessary driving and underutilization of the transportation capacity.
- Favour operators within the nearby areas to shorten the transportation distances and decrease the effects of transportation.
- Plan all deliveries carefully and avoid single runs by combining various tasks for one route.
- Monitor the environmental effects of the transportations by keeping records of the distances driven.
- Plan flexible, sufficient, and clearly marked routes for the production, maintenance, and event participants in the event area.
- Please note that only maintenance parking according to a separate plan is allowed in the areas managed by the City of Helsinki Public Works Department. You should also request approval for your traffic plan related to the construction and deconstruction of major events (luvat@hel.fi).

A row of parked bicycles in a parking lot. The bicycles are of various colors, including orange, blue, and white. They are parked in a neat row, and the background shows more bicycles and a clear sky.

**"EFFICIENT LOGISTICS
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT
AND SAVE MONEY."**


Do you come here often?

Yeah.

**How about
sharing a ride?**

The transport of people

Finland has the second highest per capita transport-induced emissions in Europe, second only to Norway. Traffic and transportation are almost always the largest individual cause of emissions at events.



**What'll happen
to us after this
festival?**

**I think we have
a sustainable
relationship.**

**EXAMPLES OF ACQUISITIONS
WHERE YOU CAN CHOOSE
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
AND ETHICAL ALTERNATIVES:**

- Paper
- Wood
- Dishes
- Food and drink
- Fabrics and accessories
- Paints
- Cleaning agents
- Electronics
- Consumables

ACQUISITIONS

Select products and services for your event that follow the principles of sustainable development.

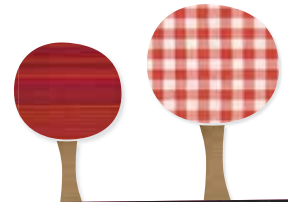
The environmental effects of acquisitions required for events should not be ignored. It is important to consider the environmental effects of the products, as well as the environmental work of the subcontractor.

Take a moment to consider whether the acquisition is necessary, whether it could be replaced by a more environmentally friendly alternative, and what will happen to it after it has been used.

Tips:

- Select an event venue that uses an environmental management system or programme, or that has an environmental management certificate.
- Find out whether the venue uses energy produced using renewable energy sources. If not, find out whether it is possible.
- When selecting subcontractors and services (such as hotels, laundries, printing services, and transportations), find out whether the company is using an environmental management system and has an external environmental management certificate, such as EcoCompass or ISO 14001). Small companies may not have the resources to construct complete environmental management systems, but find out whether they have their own environmental management programme. Ask transport companies whether they have an energy certificate.
- An ecolabel is an unbiased guarantee that the product is environmentally friendly. The Nordic swan label is common in Finland, along with the EU Ecolabel.
- Avoid chemicals in washing and cleaning agents, and use ecolabelled products.
- Favour organic and Fair Trade cotton in clothes and other fabric products.
- Use recycled or ecolabelled paper products.
- Do not use PVC for banners and other plastic products.
- Consider the delivery distances for every purchase. Could you get a similar product or service from closer?
- For more information on ecolabels, please see www.ymparisto.fi.

"THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF ANY EVENT ARE A COMBINATION OF MANY SMALL CHOICES."



Finnish people use some 100 tons of natural resources per capita every year. Make sustainable acquisitions a production principle!



I can feel the energy here!

Well, how many kWh?

ENERGY

You have many ways to affect the total energy consumption and environmental friendliness. Most of us could reduce the need for energy, but it is impossible to cut down entirely. Typical energy-consuming items include lighting, sound system and various kinds of equipment.

Tips:

- Favour event locations that use green electricity.
- Find out about the possibilities to use grid electricity and to order green electricity.
- Use biofuels, instead of fossil fuels, for generators.
- Evaluate the need for electricity at the event by mapping the equipment used and their electricity consumption.
- Use equipment with a low energy rating, if possible. Ecolabels and energy labels are granted for many domestic appliances. For more information on eco-efficient domestic appliances, please see www2.kuluttajavirasto.fi.
- In lighting, favour energy-saving alternatives, i.e. energy saving bulbs and LED lamps.
- Avoid unnecessary lighting, heating, and air conditioning. Ensure that no appliances are left on unnecessarily.
- Compensate for the carbon dioxide emissions caused by the event. For more information on compensating for the emissions, please see www.nordicoffset.fi (most of the site in Finnish only) and www.ilmastolaskuri.fi.

**"YOU CAN AND SHOULD
AFFECT THE ENERGY
CONSUMPTION OF THE EVENT."**



The EKOenergy label is the first and only European ecolabel for electricity, which helps consumers make the right choices on the sometimes complicated electricity market. EKOenergy labelled electricity meets the sustainability criteria defined by the EKOenergy network.

For more information, please see www.ekoenergy.org

FOOD AND DRINK

Well thought-out catering services provide nourishment for the body, but for the mind as well. Food represents approximately one-third of the carbon footprint of the average person. The environmental effects of food can be affected throughout its life cycle, in the production, transportation, storage, preparation, and waste management phases.

Environmentally friendly alternatives include the following:

- Vegetarian foods produced within a short distance and according to the seasonal variety.
- Organic products. An organic certificate guarantees that the item is produced using methods of organic production.
- Products with ecolabels and responsibility labels. The Fairtrade certificate, for example, guarantees that the production of the item meets the requirements for social responsibility and sustainability. More than 80 % of the Fairtrade products also have an organic certificate. However, responsibly produced or organic foods are not always climate friendly.

**"ENJOY YOUR
HEALTHY, SAFE, AND
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
MEAL!"**



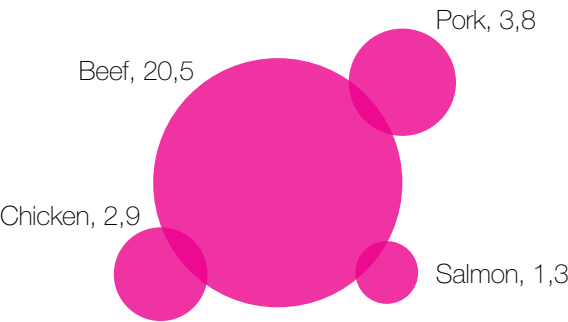
Picture: Lauri Rotko / Visit Helsinki

When planning the catering or food sales, keep organic, vegetarian, seasonal, and Fairtrade products in mind.

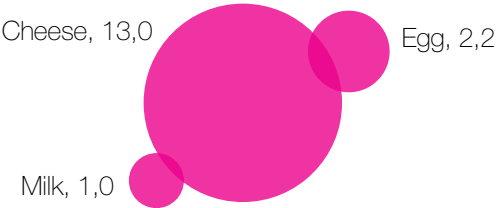
Comparison of the CO2 emissions of food products.

All values kg CO2 - ekv/kg (Source: LOW-CARBON MEAL)

Meat



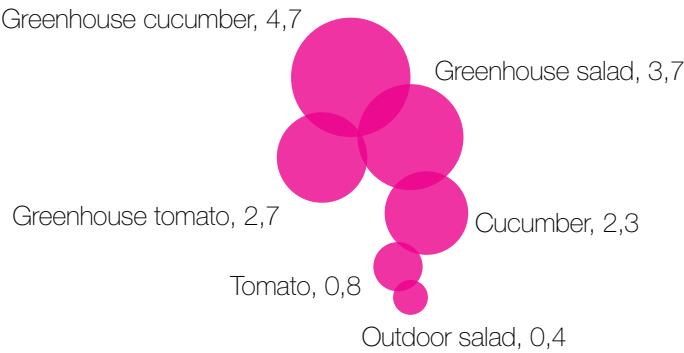
Dairy products



Edible Oils



Vegetables



Main course additions





*Mmmm, so good it
melts in my mouth!*

*Yeah, it is
biodegradable.*

A close-up photograph of various vegetables, including red bell peppers, onions, and potatoes, that have been grilled and are now skewered together. The vegetables are charred in some places, giving them a smoky appearance. The skewers are dark, possibly made of wood or bamboo. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the food in the foreground.

Food safety

In order to avoid food poisonings and illnesses, it is essential to follow all hygiene and food regulations at all events. Remember to inform the local food control and monitoring authority of the catering at the event. The relevant authorities and sources of information within the Helsinki region are:

- The City of Helsinki Environment Centre: www.hel.fi
- The City of Vantaa Centre for Environmental Affairs: www.vantaa.fi
- The Espoo region environmental health services: www.espoo.fi
- Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira's outdoor sales instructions (only available in Finnish): www.evira.fi

Tips:

- When selecting the food service producers, consider the responsibility of the potential companies, and find out whether the companies are using an environmental management system or programme. Agree with the food service provider on the food to be served, and how it is to be served.
- If possible, use durable and washable dishes. If you decide to use disposable plates and cups, use biodegradable ones. Even cardboard dishes are better than plastic and oil-based disposable dishes.
- Decrease the amount of waste by minimizing the need for and amount of disposable dishes. Could you use paper pockets or napkins instead of plates, forks, and knives?
- Organize a deposit system in connection with bar sales, to ensure that cups, bottles, and cans are efficiently recycled.
- Also offer a possibility for waste sorting in the food management area. A large amount of recyclable packaging and biowaste comes from food sales.
- If you use deep-frying oils in food preparation, find out about the utilization possibilities for the leftover grease. Do not pour it onto the ground or into sewers!
- Do not throw away food that is still edible! Efficient planning ensures that there is enough but not too much food, and that none of it goes to waste.

NOISE

**"QUIET AS A MOUSE
- OR MAYBE NOT,
AS LONG AS YOU
REMEMBER TO
CONSIDER THE RULES
AND OTHER PEOPLE."**

When organizing events, always remember that around your event, normal life goes on as usual. Noise can present a significant nuisance to the environment, and even risk to the health of the participants in the event.

If you use sound system equipment that cause significant noise, you must issue a noise notification to your local environment centre:

- The City of Helsinki Environment Centre: www.hel.fi
- The City of Vantaa Centre for Environmental Affairs: www.vantaa.fi
- The Espoo environment centre: www.espoo.fi

Tips:

- Face the stage and sound system away from residential houses.
- Use time-aligned speakers and a line array system.
- Try to end the event by 10 p.m. or continue indoors, if necessary. The limit values for the noise level are stricter the later the event continues.
- Remember to notify the facilities that are particularly vulnerable to noise, such as schools, daycare centres, hospitals, and cemeteries.
- Offer earplugs to the staff, in order to protect their hearing.
- Distribute or sell earplugs to the participants before and during the event. Ensure that the earplugs are easily accessible.

Remember to check the noise notification requirements 60 days before the event.





Cool!

Who, me?

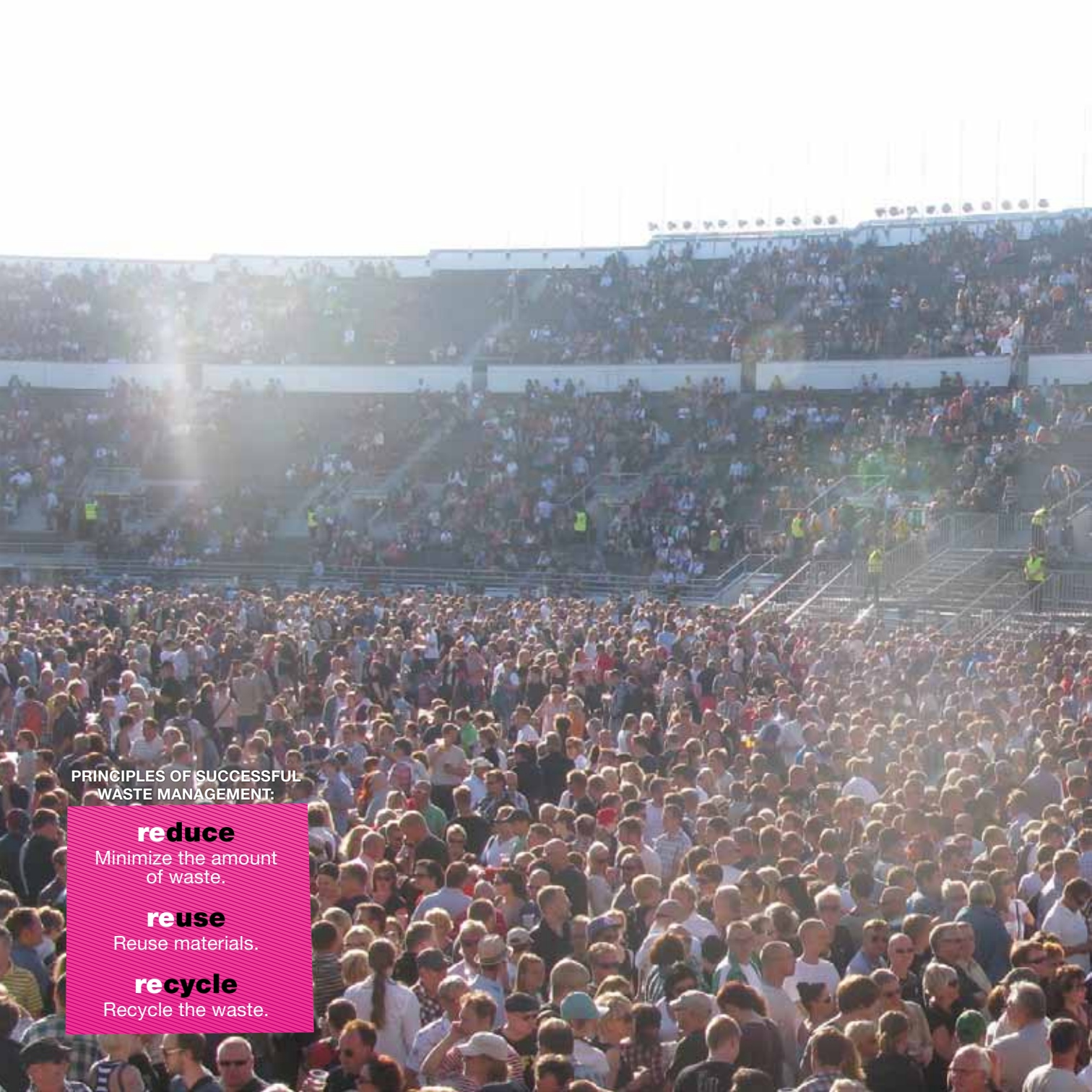
**Cool event, and
yeah, you too.**



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management is invisible, unless it is insufficient. Remember to monitor the waste management during the event, because problem solving is much easier at an early stage. There is not just one correct answer, as the best solutions always depend on the nature and location of the event.

- **Deliver a waste management plan to the local environment centre in good time (30 days before the event).**
- Avoid litter and decrease the amount of waste by minimizing the amount of unnecessary materials. **What do you really need?** You can reduce the amount of waste by e.g. reducing the amount of disposable dishes, individual packaging, the use of weak temporary structures, and distributed materials, such as printed programme sheets. What produces unnecessary waste at your event?
- **Save money and reuse** structures, banners, staff clothing, etc. Leave out the year, so you can use the materials for many years.
- Avoid unnecessary printing and **use electronic communications instead.** Create a mobile application, or link using QR code.
- Consider the types of waste typical for your event, and organize waste recycling accordingly. The waste generated by the audience, food vendors, and construction/deconstruction operations are often varied. In closed events, the waste flow is easier to manage, but in open events, you must be prepared for almost any waste section.
- **Reserve a sufficient amount of waste bins!** Locate them in visible areas and along significant routes.
- Even small amounts of hazardous waste should always be collected separately. www.hsy.fi
- Plan the amount, locations, and emptying intervals of waste bins together with the waste management company.
- Group containers for the different waste sections. If you collect compostable waste, energy waste, and mixed waste, for example, place groups of three waste containers at suitable distances of each other to ensure a consistent and sufficient waste collection system in the area.
- Place recycling points in the area in addition to the waste containers, as necessary.
- **Remember to identify the waste containers clearly!**
- Manage the waste flow by organizing recycling guidance in connection with the waste containers and/or recycling locations.
- Place ashtrays in the smoking areas to prevent cigarette butts from being left on the ground.
- Also ensure the appropriate collection and disposal of wastewater (e.g. hand washing water). If no wastewater location is appointed for the subcontractors, wastewater may end up on the ground.
- **Reserve a sufficient amount of toilets** and hand washing possibilities in events with over 500 simultaneous participants. For assistance in defining the sufficient number of public toilets, refer to www.finlex.fi (only available in Finnish).
- **Ensure the availability of clean water** and allow people to refill their own water bottles. Remember good hygiene! Water hoses heated by the sun do not ensure the sufficient quality of drinking water.
- **Share information on the waste management system of the event** on the website and programme, and with signs.
- **Think of possibilities to reuse different materials!** Many organizers reuse event banners and fair carpets by making bags out of old banners, for example.



PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL
WASTE MANAGEMENT:

reduce

Minimize the amount
of waste.

reuse

Reuse materials.

recycle

Recycle the waste.

Waste management regulations in the Helsinki metropolitan area:

Waste management at public events

21 §

(summary of the paragraph)

The event organizer is responsible for the following:

Ensuring a sufficient amount of **waste collection equipment in the area** and that their locations are appropriate.

Ensuring that **any littered areas are cleaned** if the people responsible for the littering do not clean up after themselves., in so far as Other parts of the responsibility to clean are defined in chapter 8 of the Waste Act (Jätelaki, no. 646 of 2011).

Ensuring that the **waste containers are emptied appropriately**. The containers must be emptied daily, or as they are filled.

22 §

In public events where foodstuffs are served to the public, at least the following types of reusable waste must be separated in different containers:

- 1) **cardboard and carton**, if at least 50 kg is removed from use during the event;
- 2) **organic waste**, if at least 50 kg is created during the event;
- 3) **items suitable for energy waste**, such as the plastic packages of foodstuffs and other products, used disposable dishes, cardboard and carton (if not collected separately according to item 1 or if it cannot be collected as such due to contamination or other reasons), if at least 50 of such waste is created during the event;
- 4) **glass**, if at least 50 kg is removed from use during the event, and
- 5) **metal**, if at least 50 kg is removed from use during the event.

The organizer of a public event is responsible for arranging guidance and instructions to the public on sorting recyclable waste.

Did you know that the Finnish bottle deposit recycling system was created for the purposes of organizing an event? The glass bottle recycling system was created when Coca-Cola and the Summer Olympics arrived to Finland in 1952. Now, Finland is one of the leading countries in recycling drink containers, with some 90 % of all drink containers recycled.



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

The information presented in this guide will not increase the environmental friendliness of your events, unless you spread the information to all interest groups. Inform, guide, and instruct people to make your event even greener.

Tips:

- Inform the interest groups of the event about your environmental work.
- Commit your subcontractors, staff, and audience to the environmental work at the event, to ensure that everything runs smoothly and you can reach your goals.
- Inform the audience how to reach the event on public transport, by bike, or walking.
- Ensure that everyone knows about the waste management procedures at the event.
- Use clear signs at the recycling locations and on the waste collection containers.
- Make waste sorting easy by using colour codes, symbols, or different languages as necessary. You can also ask the waste management company for stickers and signs.
- Tell the audience about your recycling system.
- Spread the word about your environmental work on social media, the programmes, and on your website.





Greening Events



ISBN 978-952-272-688-9 (printed publication)
ISBN 978-952-272-689-6 (electronic publication)

Author: City of Helsinki Environment Centre
Name of the publication: Neat event! An environmental guide for event organizers.
Year of publication: 2014
Graphic design: Museokadun Rytmii

The Greening Events project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Uusimaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. Other sponsors include the Cities of Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa.