

GOING GREEN WITHOUT SEEING RED  
AN ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDE  
CANADIAN RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICES ASSOCIATION  
By Karen Janigan

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PART ONE  
INTRODUCTION

# Going Green without Seeing Red

## 1) OVERVIEW

Canadians rank the environment as one of the biggest concerns facing the country today.

Increasingly, Canadian consumers are flexing their muscles, at the ballot box and the cash registers, to promote environmental action, whether voluntary or legislated.

The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA) developed **Going Green without Seeing Red** to help foodservice operators: assess amounts of waste generated; eliminate as much waste as possible; find help; and, communicate success to governments and patrons.

Part One provides an overview of environmental concerns and their impact on the restaurant and foodservices industry.

Part Two suggests how to measure waste generated through a waste audit and then eliminate excess waste and save money through waste management.

Part Three contains quick tips, useful tables, a list of contacts and a glossary to explain some of the buzz words.

**Going Green without Seeing Red** is designed to help restaurateurs become more environmentally responsible.

## 2) THE THREE Rs

The Three Rs stand for Reduce, Reuse and Recycle -- a program to conserve and protect natural resources in the most efficient way possible.

The Three Rs save energy, resources and disposal space.

## Going Green without Seeing Red

REDUCE the amount of resources used; protect the environment, conserve resources and save money by preventing waste rather than getting rid of it.

REUSE as many products as possible, lowering demands on energy and other resources, including raw materials.

RECYCLING is perhaps the best-known of the Three Rs. It also avoids sending waste to the landfill and conserves raw material and energy.

Implementing the Three Rs takes time and effort. It's not difficult or expensive but requires perseverance and a shift from a disposable to a conserving attitude.

### 3) WHY BOTHER?

The foodservices industry relies on a positive public image for business. One unpleasant experience can mean dozens of lost customers.

According to a national, public opinion survey, commissioned by the CRFA, half of all Canadians view quick-service outlets as "careless" when it comes to protecting the environment; followed by home delivery, institutional caterers and finally table-service restaurants.

Canadians with the worst opinion of an outlet's environmental sensitivity are the same ones who eat out the most: those between the ages 18 to 34 with a high level of education and a high household income. These are the people who are pushing the Green Revolution forward. The ones who can wield political and economic clout.

(INSERT: ANGUS REID: Canadian's Perceptions of Environmental Responsibility of Various Restaurants.)

The popularity of the environmental movement is evident in the number of lobby and pressure groups urging stronger government action on the environment. They are calling for radical action like bans on plastics in quick-service outlets and requiring reusable cutlery and dishes for eat-in service.

#### **4) LANDFILL AND INCINERATION**

One reason attention is increasingly focused on environmental issues is that government-licensed landfill sites across Canada are closing; the landfill sites serving Toronto and Edmonton are due to close in 1992, in Halifax 1994.

People are vocal about not wanting new landfill sites in their neighbourhood, preferring undeveloped land be used for parks.

Burning waste to generate energy is an alternative that does recover some value, but most governments have rejected this option.

Governments at all levels are promoting and of ten legislating the Three Rs to solve landfill and other environmental problems. They are beginning to use the full range of political, legislative and moral suasion available to them.

The quick-service industry is often blamed as the major source of polystyrene in landfill. But Dr. Bill Rathje at the University of Arizona has shown that foodservices disposables comprise only 0.25 per cent of a typical American municipal landfill.

It is important to correct misinformation, but also to stress that the foodservices

industry in Canada is working to reduce waste even further.

#### 5) GOVERNMENT REGULATION

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment adopted a goal of reducing the amount of landfilled waste by 25 per cent by 1992 and 50 per cent by the year 2000.

Provincial and municipal governments will pursue this goal through legislation, penalties and inducements if the initiative is not taken voluntarily.

Governments may:

- ban the landfilling of certain materials like plastic and corrugated cardboard (already banned in several municipalities);
- require that goods contain a percentage of recycled material or are reusable;
- increase tipping fees to discourage landfilling waste -- fees across Canada have increased 10 to 1000 per cent in the past two years;
- impose a special tax on packaging to discourage its use;
- promote and financially assist companies that behave environmentally through programs like Environmental Choice;
- require government suppliers to follow specific environmental practices.
- Several municipalities have asked the Ontario government to ban disposable tableware for customers who dine in.

## Going Green without Seeing Red

Clearly initiatives taken voluntarily will make more business sense than those legislated by government.

### 6) SAVINGS

Going green can save money. With tipping and hauling fees going up, any reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill could result in savings.

- A Toronto restaurant participating in a pilot recycling project cut its tipping and hauling fees down to \$1,000 from \$5,000 a month.
- A Vancouver restaurant cut the volume of its landfilled waste by 50 per cent in one year.
- A large metropolitan office complex cut its waste by 75 per cent and shares the savings with tenants.

Not all savings will be this dramatic. The amount of savings will depend on programs available, current tipping and hauling fees and the market for recyclable materials the business generates.

Government regulation is invariably much more costly than voluntary action taken by the industry itself. If individual companies fail to act, governments will introduce legislation to achieve waste reduction.

Many companies have found that a waste reduction program drawn up from a waste audit has the added bonus of improving efficiency and profitability.

Lastly, there is a possibility that customers will boycott establishments that fail to become environmentally responsible.

PART TWO  
WASTE MANAGEMENT ACTION  
PLAN

**INTRODUCTION**

The first step is to find out the quantity and type of waste produced. This is called a waste audit. It can stand alone or be part of an overall environmental audit that may include energy and water use.

The next step is waste management: deciding where and how waste can be cut. For example, can the incoming packaging be reduced, reused or recycled?

The third step is putting the plan into action.

Waste audit results will depend on type of foodservices establishment. The following table illustrates typical differences.

GARBAGE, PERCENTAGE OF WASTE STREAM

	Institutions	Fine Dining	Quick Service
Paper	40%	44%	65%
Glass	5	12	4
Aluminum	1	4	3
Plastic	13	14	8
Foam	10	2	9
Tin	8	3	6
Total	77	79	95

(University of Wisconsin Waste Study)