

# INCORPORATING FOOD WASTE REDUCTION INTO YOUR COVID-19 OPERATING PLANS

Restaurants and other foodservice businesses have been hit hard by COVID-19, and many still don't know when they'll be able to reopen completely – or at all. Reducing food waste matters now more than ever, since it has a direct impact on business finances and operations. Wasting less food can lower total food costs, but do your existing food waste reduction plans need to be adjusted to reflect this new environment?

These guidelines can help you add food waste reduction procedures into your reopening and post-COVID operational plans.

For additional information, please contact [info@refed.com](mailto:info@refed.com).



## IDENTIFY INTERNAL CHAMPIONS

Find and elevate individuals (often on-site managers or social leaders) to prioritize and lead initiatives that make food waste unacceptable in your restaurant's culture.



## KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WASTING

Track what and how much you're wasting, why it's being wasted, and where it's going. Pay attention to how operational changes are impacting waste.



## MANAGE PRODUCTION CAREFULLY

Determine your minimum merchandising levels, both in diversity and amount of product, as well as prioritize whole-product and cross-utilization. Keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold during storage, display and delivery can reduce the amount of food discarded.



## ENGAGE YOUR TEAM IN A NEW "BUSINESS AS USUAL"

Incorporating sustainable solutions to food waste reduction requires training and regular team engagement.



## BUILD & STRENGTHEN DONATION PARTNERSHIPS

Learn about food recovery organizations in your community and co-create recovery plans for both normal operations and times of closure or crisis.



## LIMIT YOUR MENUS

Be thoughtful about the size of your menu and the diversity of options offered – and consider the implications on forecasting, inventory, and waste management.



## COMMUNICATE WITH CONSUMERS

Engage a newly conscious and attentive audience about food waste reduction best practices.



## HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS REDUCE FOOD WASTE

Look for opportunities to help your customers reduce food waste in their own homes with packaging that facilitates storage and reduces spoilage.



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## *Useful Resources*

Follow these links for useful resources to fight food waste.

- [“Save the Food” Consumer Best Practices](#)
- [Hotel Kitchen](#)  
Resources for hotels to prevent and manage food waste
  - [Bin Tracker](#)
  - [Kitchen Checklist](#)
- [86 Food Waste](#)  
Resources for restaurants to prevent and manage food waste
- [Leanpath](#)
- [Winnow](#)
- [Sodexo “Huddle cards”](#)
- [James Beard Foundation Waste Not Curriculum](#)
- [Feeding America - Find Your Local Food Bank](#)
- [U.S. EPA’s Excess Food Opportunities Map](#)

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