

Event Sustainability Guidelines

We look forward to hosting your event in Santa Monica! As a leader in sustainability, the City is excited to collaborate with you to integrate sustainable practices into event operations. Santa Monica offers 100% green-powered grid electricity, miles of protected bike lanes, an alternatively-fueled and zero-emission bus fleet, world-class water quality and watershed management programs, and procurement practices that protect human health and the environment.

We invite you to amplify the positive impact of your event by implementing sustainable practices. Prioritizing renewable energy, reducing water and waste, and supporting local environmental initiatives are opportunities to support the City's sustainability goals.

We are excited to work together to make your event successful and sustainable!

Food & Beverage

Relevant Regulations

[SMMC 4.55.250](#) – Glass containers are prohibited on the beach.

[SMMC 5.44.020](#) – Non-marine-degradable disposable food service ware is prohibited.

[SMMC 5.45.020](#) – Single-use plastic carryout bags are prohibited at city-permitted events.

[SMMC 5.46.040](#) – Waste is required to be separated into landfill, recyclable, and organic waste streams.

[SMMC 5.46.080](#) – Large events and venues are required to recover edible food with a food recovery organization.

- Prioritize reusable food service ware, cups/glassware, and utensils for onsite consumption.
- Provide straws and disposable service ware only upon request.
- Encourage attendees to bring reusable water bottles and provide free water refill stations.
- Aluminum containers are preferred if single-use bottles are necessary. Avoid plastic bottles.
- Provide at least one plant-based option for every meat-based option on the menu.
- Clearly indicate plant-based, locally grown, and seasonal options on menus.
- Select products with credible sustainability certifications (e.g. Marine Stewardship Council, Seafood Watch, USDA Organic, Fair Trade Certified).

- Avoid items with excessive packaging (e.g. condiment packets, individually wrapped snacks)
- Partner with [Santa Monica's certified green businesses](#) to increase your event sustainability and support local businesses.
- Recover edible food through partners like [FoodCycle LA](#) or similar food recovery organizations.

Event Production & Venue Logistics

Relevant Regulations

[13 CCR § 2485](#) – Diesel-fueled trucks may not idle their engines for more than five consecutive minutes.

[SMMC 8.40.020](#) – All fireworks are illegal in the City of Santa Monica.

[SMMC 4.44.020](#) – Smoking is prohibited in many public spaces in Santa Monica, including beaches, parks, the Pier, and the Third Street Promenade.

[CA Penal Code § 653.1](#) – The intentional release of mylar helium-filled balloons into the atmosphere is prohibited.

- Confirm your venue participates in the [Clean Power Alliance](#), which enables renewable energy for your event. All city-owned venues operate using 100% renewable energy.
- Utilize temporary onsite solar or battery storage solutions if additional power is needed.
- Use solar- and biodiesel-powered generators for backup power if necessary. Avoid diesel generators.
- Use electric or hybrid vehicles for staff transport and deliveries.
- Provide bike valet services.
- Schedule deliveries during off-peak hours to reduce congestion.
- Design stages, booths, and installations for reuse or modularity. Avoid single-use build materials like foam board and PVC banners.
- Rent furniture, audiovisual equipment and decor locally instead of purchasing or shipping.
- Do not use balloons, confetti, or glitter as décor.
- Donate leftover construction materials, giveaway items, furniture and other materials at the end of the event.
 - RESOURCE: [Donation Opportunities – Los Angeles County Waste-Free Event Guide](#)

- Use the least toxic cleaning products to protect human health and the environment, e.g. Green Seal, EPA's Safer Choice.

Attendee Communication & Engagement

- Develop digital signage or an event app for maps, announcements, and other event information.
- Print physical signage on recycled-content materials.
- Avoid vinyl. If vinyl use is necessary, arrange for recycling or repurposing, e.g. upcycling with companies like [Rewilder](#) and [Rareform](#).
- List public transit, rideshare, and micromobility options before car parking information in attendee communications.
- Offer incentives for attendees who travel car-free or bring reusable water bottles, e.g. priority entry, raffle prizes, or exclusive giveaways.
- Include sustainability messaging in event communications to set expectations for attendees.

Giveaways & Merchandise

- Design merchandise with sustainability in mind by using natural or organic fibers, recycled content, and ethically sourced materials.
- Avoid low-value giveaways that will be discarded quickly. This includes things like drink koozies, keychains, and obsolete or low-quality electronics (e.g. USB drives, headphones, and flashlights)
- Opt for low-waste giveaways such as digital coupons, food/drink samples, or mini-experiences.
- Avoid "spin-to-win" prize wheels that leave attendees with unwanted items.
- Encourage attendees to return wristbands, lanyards and name tag holders for reuse or recycling. When these items are used, prioritize materials that can be recycled or composted.

Have questions? Need more information?

Contact the City of Santa Monica's Office of Sustainability and the Environment! We have staff resources and technical support available to help.

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