



# Universal Zero Waste Ordinance

The City of Boulder is working to become a zero waste community, where we reduce the amount of waste we create, and reuse, recycle and compost most of what we throw away. The Universal Zero Waste Ordinance (UZWO) is one of many community-wide efforts to work towards Boulder’s zero waste future. UZWO requires all businesses to provide access to separated collections for recycling, compostable materials and landfill-bound trash.

## What does this mean for your restaurant?

All restaurants and grocery stores in Boulder need to report compliance with the UZWO periodically. By reducing and separating waste, your business reduces its environmental impact and becomes a role model for our community. Your customers and employees will appreciate your efforts too! Below are the necessary steps to comply with the requirements.

### Step One: Ensure you have the right bins and signs

The UZWO requires that every business has properly labeled bins in the right places.

- **Back-of-house:** Food-based businesses must have bins for all three waste streams (compost, recycle and landfill) in each employee-only area, such as a kitchen, bar or service area. These bins must be clearly labeled.



An exception can be made if an employee-only area does not generate a particular waste stream. For instance, bar service areas may not generate compost, so they may only need recycle and landfill bins and signs.

- **Front-of-house:** If you have a “self-bussing” restaurant where customers are clearing their own tables, you will need a zero waste station for collecting all three waste streams in your dining area. All front-of-house bins must be grouped together and clearly signed, including descriptions in English and Spanish.



Exceptions can be made if stand-alone bins are needed because of space constraints or due to a unique waste stream (e.g., landfill bin for waste generated from a tasting station). In these cases, directional signs to a zero waste station or the other waste stream collections need to be in place.

- **Restrooms:** Paper towels provided in your restrooms should be composted. You can convert your existing bin into a compost container by adding a sign and using BPI certified compostable bags. You might also want to add a small landfill bin and sign for other customer-generated bathroom waste.

### Step Two: Train your employees

Another part of the UZWO requires that you train your employees on how to identify and separate recycling and compostable materials from landfill-bound trash. This can be accomplished by viewing the training video ([English](#) or [Spanish](#)) and then taking a quiz that tests waste sorting knowledge ([English](#) or [Spanish](#)). Advisors are also available to provide onsite or online training. It is further recommended that you include waste sorting training within any onboarding processes you have.

### Step Three: Complete and submit the reporting form

Food-based businesses must periodically report compliance to the city by submitting a Zero Waste Reporting Form. Businesses that do not report by the deadline are considered non-compliant. The Zero Waste Reporting Form can be found here: [Zero Waste Reporting Form - 2022 - Formstack](#)

## Need Help?

Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE) advisors are available to help you achieve compliance with the Universal Zero Waste Ordinance. Reach out today for complementary support:



- Standard signs and/or stickers
- Custom signs specific to your businesses' waste
- Employee training
- Compost and/or recycling bins
- Reporting form guidance

(303) 786-7223 | [pacepartners@bouldercounty.org](mailto:pacepartners@bouldercounty.org) | [www.pacepartners.com](http://www.pacepartners.com)



### Free Compostable Bags are Available Through the Green Bag Giveaway Program

After completing the Zero Waste Reporting Form, you can enroll in a subscription for compostable bin liners, paid for by the City of Boulder's Disposable Bag Fee. If you choose to participate, you will receive up to two boxes a month, delivered straight to your door, free of charge.

