

ALTERNATIVES TO DISPOSABLE DISHES FOR ST. GEORGE CAMPUS EVENTS

Departmental parties and colloquia at U of T often generate a large amount of non-compostable waste in the form of disposable dishes and cups. This is unfortunate, given the increasing evidence of harmful human impacts on the planet in general, and the shortage of landfill space in Toronto in particular. A number of more environmentally friendly and affordable alternatives are now readily available for U of T events. While there may be a small premium associated with these in some cases, in others the elimination of disposable dishes results in monetary savings. For example, at this year's Darwin Day, the UTBEAT and the EGSA requested that no disposable cups be provided, and that attendees provide their own glasses/mugs for beverages. This simple choice saved over 100 cups—and \$10.

This document provides a brief guide to some alternatives that may be more environmentally sustainable, along with cost comparisons.

1. Catering service with china or biodegradable dishes

Aramark is responsible for all catering at U of T, through Campus Food and Beverage Services. They offer biodegradable and china services as alternatives to the usual disposable plastic dishware, and they will deal with dishwashing afterwards.

Rates:

Biodegradable service: \$0.99/person (includes all items needed for the order)
China: \$0.55/piece

Contact details:

Contact name: Sandra Amaral or Otilia Kiss
Phone: 416-598-5382
E-mail: UofT_Catering@aramark.ca

2. Renting china

Food Services has no objection to departments providing their own dishes or using another supplier, but the request that the caterers not provide disposable dishes must be indicated on the application form. Requests for biodegradable dishes should be made well in advance, as these are not always in stock.

Alligator Party Rentals rents out non-disposable dishes for parties and picks up the dirty dishes at the end of the event. Depending on the size of the event, this may represent a more affordable alternative to Aramark dish service.

Rates:

Beer/wine/other glasses: \$3.75-\$4.00/dozen
Plates/bowls: \$4.00/dozen
Cutlery: \$2.75/dozen
Delivery: \$40

Note: Minimum order is \$75

Contact details:

Phone: 416-532-1162
Website: alligatorpartyrental.com
Address: 505 Dupont St

3. Purchasing china

This option may be reasonable for smaller events (<30 people). The **Ramsay Wright 4th floor kitchen** (RW 431) has a sink and a dishwasher that could potentially be used to clean up after events if we were to provide our own dishes. The dishwasher appears to be functional but not actually connected to a water supply; presumably this could be remedied if it were deemed to be worthwhile. RW staff were unaware that we had a dishwasher in the building. If the department is interested in purchasing a set of dishes, UTBEAT would be happy to conduct research to find the most affordable source.

4. Purchasing biodegradable dishes

For events not catered by Aramark and at which china dishes would be impractical, departments can purchase biodegradable dishes from **Green Shift**, as was done at the 2008 EEB Colloquium. Green Shift has an extensive catalogue of environmentally-friendly party supplies, including cups, plates, utensils, and napkins.

Rates:

Beer glasses: \$104.95/case of 1000
Coffee cups: \$89.72/ case of 1000
Knives, forks, or spoons: \$61.99/box of 1000
Chopsticks: \$63.99/case of 3000
Dinner plates: \$65.03/case of 500

Note: Items can also be purchased in smaller quantities, at a slightly higher per-unit cost. However, there is a \$20 surcharge for orders under \$150. Prices do not include taxes or shipping and handling.

Contact details:

Contact name: Amy Wood
Phone: 416-925-9665
E-mail: info@greenshift.ca
Website: www.greenshift.ca

5. Alcoholic beverages

Campus Beverage Services is responsible for serving all alcoholic drinks on campus. They have no objection to people supplying their own cups, provided it is clear to everyone that drinks will still be of a standard volume. If people are going to provide their own cups, this should be indicated on the application form, along with a request that plastic cups not be provided by Beverage Services. If necessary, this can be cleared with the Beverage Services manager, Clayton Hillis, who is supportive of the effort to reduce waste.

There is currently no biodegradable option from Beverage Services. Mr. Hillis could order biodegradable cups if there were sufficient university-wide demand; he does not have room to stock both conventional and biodegradable cups.

Savings:

Approximately \$0.15 per beverage served, based on the charge for disposable cups (Regular plastic cups: \$1.85 for 10 wine glasses; \$2.50 for 25 beer glasses)

Contact details:

Contact name: Clayton Hillis

Phone: 416-978-6415

Email: clayton.hillis@utoronto.ca