



## The **GO-ZERO CHALLENGE** Recycling Ambassador

Earth Day Houston is proud to enable Houstonians and all attendees the opportunity to experience a 'waste-free' event. Perhaps this could spread to other events!

GO ZERO is a team sport. EDH provides the framework, you provide the real work, and the attendees learn to understand and then activate the framework.

This challenge is bold. We will feature two types of waste receptacles: recycling bins and compost bins. We will have the permanent park waste receptacles as backup, but the intention is to avoid using them. The receptacles will be attended by Recycling Ambassadors to guide the attendees on the proper choice in real time.

The materials introduced to the event are either reusable, recyclable, or compostable. However, some random materials will emerge, and, as you well know, even the right materials can go in the wrong bin and become a contaminant in that bin. This activity at the bins is where you will make a difference! In addition to keeping the materials in the right bin you will be educating the attendees about recycling in Houston, and they will appreciate that!

At the end of the day, food waste and compostable food accessories will be transported to a composting facility to become a valuable nutrient for plants. Recyclables will go on to a MRF (Materials Recycling Facility), and trash will go to the landfill. You will help us measure all three types during the day so we can calculate our Diversion Rate!

### **Instructions for your Shift**

**What to wear:** Please wear dark or black pants, shorts, or skirts and comfortable shoes. You will receive a Recycling Ambassador badge.

**What to bring:** Please bring as little as possible since we have no secure place to store things.

**Parking:** If you can use transit, please do, otherwise parking at Discovery Green is described at the park website link: <https://www.downtownhouston.org/parking/> and there is no reimbursement for parking, much as we appreciate your volunteerism.

**Check in:** Please arrive at the Check-in tent about 15 minutes before your shift. Recycling Ambassadors will sign in and receive:

Lanyard

Clipboard and pen (which will stay at the station, so if you are the second shift, you will get it from the first shift person)



**Report to your Zero Center:** The Go-Zero team will escort you to your station for your shift so you can help people experience a Zero-Waste Earth Day!

**Brief Training Session:** The Go-Zero team member will go through a brief training reminder session with you to go over the process and answer any questions you might have. After these instructions is the chart and after it are questions you may be asked by park visitors, and we will go over the items with you, in case you have any questions:

**During Shift:** On the back of your clipboard, you will see the chart of the materials that are recyclable or compostable. If something is not on this list, it will need to go in the trash receptacle. We would like you to jot down on the forms in your clipboard everything that has to be thrown in the trash on the *Landfill Tally Sheet*. Other volunteers will take the bags and weigh the trash (hopefully not much), recycling, and food material to be composted, but we need YOU to record the weights of the bags (and feel free to record any comments).

**Communication:** Cell phones are very helpful. We will be available for your call, and our numbers are on the chart on the back of your clipboard. Our goal is to have at least one person stay with the containers throughout your shift.

**After Shift:** You are welcome to stay after your shift, however, please return your Recycling Ambassador lanyard if you choose to stay at the event.

MATERIALS CHART		
RECYCLE	COMPOST	TRASH
Clean (ish) Plastic Containers #1-5 & #7	All Food	#6 Plastics: Solo Cups, styrofoam
Aluminum Cans	Compostable Utensils	Individual condiments
Tin Cans	Liquids to 5 gal. bucket	Plastic Wrappers
Cardboard	Paper Plates/bowls/boats	Plastic wrapped things
Magazines & Brochures	Paper Cups	Non-compost foodware:
Milk & Juice cartons & boxes	Napkins/Tissues	Plastic Straws
Paper	Paper Towels	Plastic Utensils
Paperboard		Plastic bags/shrink wrap
		Diapers
Glass to 5 gal. bucket		The list goes on.....



## QUESTIONS You May Be Asked as a Recycling Ambassador

**Q. Which bin do I put this in?**

**A.** Refer to the chart, and help them put the material in the correct bin.

**Q. I got this food container from one of the restaurants, and it doesn't look compostable.**

**A.** It is probably not compostable, but it may be recyclable. If you can have the person 'dump' the food into the compost bin, and it's fairly clean, it can be recycled. If they brought regular plastic utensils with it, the utensils go in the trash.

**Q. This bottle/cup/can still has liquid in it, what should I do?**

**A.** Recycled containers need to be empty. Encourage them to drink it, but empty into the 5-gallon bucket prior to disposal. They don't have to be dry.

**Q. Why can paper plates/cups/boats/napkins/paper towels go into the Compost bins? I thought they were recyclable.**

**A.** Paper fiber is compostable, and food soiled fiber should be composted (as it can't be recycled), and low-grade fiber in napkins and paper towels is not recyclable either.

**Q. The signs say the utensils go in the compost, but they feel like plastic. Why?**

**A.** These are compostable plastic designed to compost with the food waste. Sadly, regular plastic utensils are not recyclable or compostable.

**Q. Does zero waste mean absolutely no trash?**

**A.** Zero waste means the **goal** is zero. Often, zero waste is 10% trash maximum, which is not easy. We'll see how we did when we analyze the data after the event.

**Q. Why can't we recycle or compost everything?**

**A.** Not everything is recyclable or compostable. Sorry, but that's the way it is. Let's fix it!

**Q. Where is the food waste going to be composted?**

**A.** Nature's Way Resources in Conroe.

**Q. Where is the recycling going?**

**A.** Wash America will process the recycling.

**Q. What if I'm not sure if it is recyclable or compostable?**

**A.** When in doubt, *throw it out*. We do not want to contaminate our recycling or compost.

**Q. What can I recycle in Houston? What can I recycle outside of Houston?**

**A.** Houston Solid Waste is at booth # 88. Outside Houston: [www.recycleinfo.org](http://www.recycleinfo.org)