Coffee, Tea and Beverage Services

City of Santa Monica

EASY GUIDE

Introduction

This Guide is intended for City facilities that pay a vendor to provide coffee, tea and beverage supplies for City employees. Specifications for procuring ethical and fair trade products that are sustainably produced and tips for reducing energy and waste are covered.

Purchasing coffee, tea, and beverage supplies

The City does not have an approved vendor for this type of service so it is up to each facility to arrange this service. Facilities should communicate the recommendations and specifications outlined in this Guide with the prospective vendor.

City Specifications

Minimum Requirements

- Select at least one coffee or tea that has earned one of the following 3rd-party sustainability certifications:
  - Fair Trade USA (Fair Trade Certified)
  - Fair Trade International
  - Institute for Market Ecology's Fair for Life
  - Rainforest Alliance
  - USDA Organic
- Specify bulk creamers and sugar to reduce packaging waste:
- Disposable cups must be provided by the City's contracted vendor, which can be found on the Procurement Section on E-desk.
- Specify wood stirrers instead of plastic.

Exceeds Minimum Requirements

- Avoid bottle (glass) brewers; opt for airpots or thermal brewers, which are more energy efficient and do not burn your coffee:
- Specify cocoa, sweeteners, and creamers that are certified organic (by CCOF, USDA or an equivalent certification).
- Specify an additional coffee or tea that carries one of the certifications listed in the "Minimum Requirements" section.
- Look for opportunities to purchase from local vendors.
- Request coffee filters that are unbleached
- Avoid single-cup brewing systems.
- Request a sugar-free sweetener, such as Stevia, and a plant-based creamer, such as almond or soy milk.

Look for these eco-labels!

Important notes and tips

Encourage employees to use reusable mugs or tumblers when drinking coffee or tea. Coffee grinds, stirrers and other compostable items should be placed in compost bin, if available.

Benefits to our environment, personal health and community

- Fair trade certifications ensure that workers producing imported products are paid a living wage, have safe working conditions, avoid child labor, use environmentally sustainable production practices.
- Organic certifications avoid highly toxic pesticides, promote the use of compost and mulch instead of chemical fertilizers, and reward farmers that use production methods that conserve soil, water and energy.
- Reusable cups, serving ware, and cutlery prevent waste and eliminate the likelihood that plastic waste will inadvertently enter the ocean, where it can threaten fish, turtles and other marine wildlife. It can also lower food service costs (by lowering both the upfront costs as well as the disposal costs associated with single-use cups and other food service ware items.)
- Preserves forest biodiversity by purchasing coffee and other products that are certified by the Rainforest Alliance.

LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance credits available

City employees can help Santa Monica earn green building credits under the US Green Building Council's LEED EBOM standard by purchasing food and beverages that are certified fair trade or organic or Rainforest Alliance certified, or that contain raw materials that have been harvested and produced within 100 miles of the City. In addition, purchasing compostable food service ware can enable the City to set up a food waste composting program, which also can help the City earn green building credits.

Did you know?

- An estimated 1.6 billion cups of coffee are drunk every day. That's over 18,500 cups per second.
- Every day, over 500 million plastic straws are used and discarded in the United States alone.