

Vending Machines



Department of
Health

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ASSESSING & EVALUATING VENDING MACHINES

Assessing Food and Beverage Products:

Use the Vending Machine Inventory Worksheet for Foods and Vending Machine Inventory Worksheet for Beverages at the end of this section to assess the current nutritional status of products in the vending machines and decide if:

- Each product meets the nutrition standards.
- A healthier option is available. If applicable, use the Healthy Vending Summary Tool at the end of this section to summarize the analysis of all the organization's vending products.

Evaluating Customer Acceptance:

Staff and customer surveys are an excellent way to increase buy-in when introducing new products. Utilize the Customer Vending Survey at the end of this section to survey the use, spending, and items purchased from vending machines by customers before and after changes are made to products in the machine. The survey can be modified to include specific products offered in your machine (question 7). These tools should be completed before any product changes are made to assess the current environment, and periodically as new products are added/changed to assess improvements.

TIPS AND GUIDANCE FOR USING THESE MATERIALS

Policy Considerations:

Having a policy stating that food served in the dining or market establishment is healthy sends a clear message to staff and customers that their health and wellness is valued. Decide if you want to create a policy that dictates food and beverage standards in your organization's vending machines. Having an organizational policy is sustainable; even if leadership changes, healthy standards will be a part of routine business operations.

Phase-In Approach:

If making drastic changes all at once seems overwhelming, follow a three-phase approach to gradually improve products over a one-year time frame:

Phase 1

Assess at the beginning and then stock new products so that 25% of snack foods and beverages meet the nutrition standards; assess again at the end of month four.

Phase 2

Stock new products so that 50% of snack foods and beverages meet the nutrition standards; assess at the end of month eight.

Phase 3

Stock new products so that 75% of snack foods and beverages meet the nutrition standards; assess at the end of month 12.

- ★ The Randolph-Sheppard Act is a federal law mandating that persons who are legally blind have priority in operating vending facilities on government properties. Meet with your organization and vendors as needed to learn what options are available for your facility.

IDEAS FOR HEALTHY VENDING OPTIONS

- Dried fruit.
- Applesauce.
- Canned fruit (in 100% juice).
- Nuts.
- Trail mix (nuts, fruit, and seeds only).
- Peanut butter/pretzel packs.
- Whole-grain crackers.
- Whole-grain pita chips.
- Whole-grain rice cakes.
- Popcorn.
- Pretzels (unsalted or lightly salted).
- Graham crackers.
- Baked chips/snacks.
- Water (plain, sparkling, seltzer, or flavored).
- Low-fat or fat-free milk.
- 100% juice (no added sweeteners).
- Unsweetened tea.



ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST:

- Gather commitment and engagement from staff in relevant departments.
- Assess current vending machine food and beverage products (Vending Machine Inventory Worksheet for Foods, Vending Machine Inventory of Beverages, and Healthy Vending Summary Tool at the end of this section).
- Contact and meet with vendor to discuss options (consider Randolph-Sheppard Act if necessary) about products, timeline, eco-friendly options, pricing, and nutrition information.
- Email all staff/employees to communicate upcoming changes and complete Customer Vending Survey for baseline assessment of vending use and product ideas.
- Decide on time frame for changes (all at once or phase-in approach).
- Begin making healthy substitutions to products in vending machines.
- Market and promote healthy substitutions to staff/employees.
- Evaluate customer acceptance/use and compliance via assessment tools every four to six months or as needed for vendor.
- Make changes to products based on customer survey and product assessment results; communicate results.

MARKETING & PROMOTION

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Final Rule, vending machine operators with 20 or more food vending machines must prominently display each food's calorie content. Labeling foods allows consumers to make informed choices.

Product

- Directly share which products are new and healthy through promotional materials.

Placement

- Place healthier items at or just below eye level; use a planogram to help with stocking.
- Stock multiple slots with the same healthy item to increase perception of demand.
- Place vending machine across from or near a water fountain to encourage water consumption.

Price

- Price healthier items equal to or at a lower price than less healthy items.

Promotion

- Use labeling and color-coding to highlight healthier items (e.g., stickers, product pushers).
- Use floor decal and Good Food Here posters to promote healthy items.
- Host taste-testing events to introduce new products.
- Send emails to customers when new products are stocked to explain health benefits.
- Utilize social media to promote new products and share educational messages (X, Facebook, Instagram, employee portals, etc.).



VENDING MACHINE INVENTORY WORKSHEET FOR FOODS

Food Product	(Example) Potato Chips							
Unit Size	1.5oz.							
Servings Per Unit	1							
Is a smaller unit size available? Y/N	Y							
Is product candy? Y/N (If yes, consider replacing.)	N							
Is product plain nuts or nut/fruit mix? Y/N (If yes, note different standards.)	N							
Have ingredient and nutrition info? Y/N	Y							
Calories (per label serving)	200							
Sodium (in mg per label serving)	350							
Meets nutrition standards? Y/N (If no, consider replacing.)	N							
Notes/Actions (For example, replace, discontinue, ask about smaller size, get nutrition facts, find healthier version.)	Replace with baked potato chips. Meets standards							

VENDING MACHINE INVENTORY WORKSHEET FOR BEVERAGES

Beverage Product								
Unit Size								
Servings Per Unit								
Is a smaller unit size available? Y/N								
Is product a sugar-sweetened beverage? Y/N (If yes, replace.)								
Have ingredient and nutrition info? Y/N								
Calories (per label serving)								
Sodium (in mg per label serving)								
Meets nutrition standards? Y/N (If no, consider replacing.)								
Notes/Actions (For example, replace, discontinue, ask about smaller size, get nutrition facts, find healthier version.)								

HEALTHY VENDING SUMMARY TOOL

Vending Machine	Location	Number of Slots	Items Meeting Criteria
815A	Second Floor	50	25

CUSTOMER VENDING SURVEY

[ORGANIZATION] is conducting a survey to gather information about the food and beverages available in vending machines. Our goal is to offer healthy options you will enjoy. Thank you for your input.

1. How healthy do you think the items are in the current vending machine(s)?
- a. Mostly healthy.
 - b. Neutral.
 - c. Mostly unhealthy.
 - d. I don't know.

2. How many times per week do you purchase from the vending machine(s)?
- a. Never.
 - b. Less than once per week.
 - c. 1–2 times per week.
 - d. 3–4 times per week.
 - e. 5–6 times per week.
 - f. 7 or more times per week.

3. On average, how much do you spend per item at the vending machine(s)?
- a. \$1 - \$2
 - b. \$2 - \$3
 - c. \$3 or more.

4. I would purchase healthy options in the vending machine(s) if they were available.
- a. Agree.
 - b. Disagree.
 - c. No opinion.

5. I would use the vending machine(s) more often if there were more healthy choices.
- a. Agree.
 - b. Disagree.
 - c. No opinion.

6. When making a choice at a vending machine, how important is:

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important
Taste			
Price			
How healthy the snack/beverage is			

7. Which healthy items would you be most interested in purchasing from the vending machine(s)?

	Interested	Not interested	No opinion
Water (plain, sparkling, and flavored)			
Milk			
100% Juice			
Baked Chips/Pretzels			
Dried Fruits			
Seeds/Nuts			
Granola Bars			

8. Comments/Suggestions: _____



SAMPLE POLICY

Rationale of Policy:

[Insert organization] is committed to the health and well-being of our employees. The strong relationship between diet and health and the increasing rates of overweight and obesity make supporting nutritious choices at work part of our commitment to health. The following guidelines were designed to make the healthy food and beverage choice the easy choice. By following these guidelines, we can promote better health and help reduce risks for chronic diseases.

Policy Components:

Effective [insert date], it is the policy of [insert organization] that when foods and beverages are sold on [insert organization] property, the vendor must comply with the following nutrition standards, recommended by the American Heart Association:

Food Standards:
At least [insert percent] % of foods in vending machines should meet these standards:

Snacks (except plain nuts and nut/fruit mixes)

- ≤ 200 calories per label serving.
- ≤ 240 mg sodium per label serving.
- ≤ 1 g saturated fat.
- Grain-based bars ≥ 10% daily value dietary fiber and ≤ 7 g total sugars per label serving.

NOTE: Sugar-free mints and gum are acceptable.

Plain Nuts and Nut/Fruit Mixes

- Serving size ≤ 1.5 ounces (1 ounce preferred).
- ≤ 140 mg sodium per label serving.
- ≤ 7 g added sugar per label serving.

Entrées

- ≤ 500 calories.
- ≤ 15 g total fat (excluding nuts, seeds, and products containing nuts or nut butters).
- ≤ 2 g saturated fat (per 200 calories; excluding nuts, seeds, and products containing nuts or nut butters).
- ≤ 230 mg sodium.
- 10 g added sugar.
- ≥ 2 g fiber (if product is grain-based or potato-based).

Beverage Standards:
At least [insert percent] % of beverages in vending machines should meet these standards:

Water

- Plain, sparkling, and flavored.
- ≤ 10 calories per serving.

Milk

- Fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and milk alternatives (soy, almond, etc.).
- ≤ 130 calories per 8 fluid ounces.

Unsweetened Coffee and Tea

100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice

- No added sugars/sweeteners, except non-nutritive sweeteners.
- ≤ 120 calories per 8 fluid ounces.
- ≤ 150 calories per 10 fluid ounces.
- ≤ 180 calories per 12 fluid ounces.

All Other Beverages

- ≤ 10 calories per serving.

Implementation Standards

The vendor must:

- Price items meeting the nutrition standards at an equivalent or lower amount than the price of items not meeting the standards.
- Place items meeting the nutrition standards in the top third of the vending machine, or along the right side of the vending machine, so that they are visible.
- Clearly label healthier food and beverage items in vending machines. The vendor shall work in collaboration with [insert organization] staff to determine which options constitute healthier options that should be labeled.
- Work with [insert organization] staff to promote healthier options using signage, displays, or other materials to highlight healthier options.
- Provide an initial planogram (a planning diagram that shows the arrangement and pricing of products) for vending machines.
- Provide [weekly/monthly] sales data for each vending machine to [insert organization] on a [weekly/monthly] basis.

Considerations

The vendor should consider:

- Removing advertisements for products that don't meet the nutrition standards, including on vending machine facades.

Monitoring, Compliance, and Review

- An employee survey will be administered [annually] that evaluates the use of the policy and seeks further suggestions for its improvement and ongoing implementation.
- An assessment of the vending machines will be administered [monthly] by [insert staff member/ committee/ organization] to evaluate compliance with the policy standards.
- The vendor and the [insert organization] will meet [quarterly/annually] to assess the operational and financial results of implementing the policy.
- The [quarterly/annual] review will include an on-site meeting to review sales data, survey results, consumer satisfaction and/or complaints, and vendor concerns.
- [Insert name of organization] will evaluate and update this policy [6 months] from implementation and every [2 years] after, at minimum.

Signature (Organization)

Date

Signature (Vendor)

Date

Resources:

- Exceed: The Tool for Using Healthy Food Service Guidelines. (2017). Change Lab Solutions.
- Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit. (2014). American Heart Association.
- Key Components of Food Procurement & Vending Policies. (2015). Public Health Law Center.



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