Why Waste Reduction Matters in Convenience Store Foodservice

The hidden cost of inefficiency

WHY WASTE COSTS MORE THAN IT LOOKS

38.9%
of U.S. c-store in-store gross profit dollars came from foodservice in 2025
NACS (2026)

73.9%
of c-store foodservice sales were prepared food in 2025, up from 66.4% in 2021
NACS (2026)

347K
tons of prepared food wasted in the U.S. retail sector in 2024
ReFED (2024 data)

2–3 hrs
typical shelf life of a breakfast sandwich in the warmer
W. Capra, via CSP

WHERE FOODSERVICE WASTE COMES FROM

Overproduction
Making more than sells

Poor timing
Food made too early for traffic

Menu too broad
Slow items made and tossed daily

Spoilage
Raw ingredients expire unused

Weak merchandising
Good food customers don’t see

Surplus food as a share of sales

U.S. sector-wide estimates, 2024



C-store foodservice sits between both models, with restaurant-style prep and retail-style sell-through.

Source: ReFED sector fact sheets (2024 data)

Treat waste as a process signal

- Operations: production doesn’t match traffic
- Merchandising: food isn’t seen or refreshed
- Strategy: menu too big for the store

Avoid the opposite mistake

- Cutting so deep that items sell out
- Chasing zero waste at the cost of sales
- Tracking totals with no context

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Waste as a rate
Divide waste by sales

By item and hour
Find where the loss sits

Track sell-outs too
Zeros mean missed sales

Review weekly
Fix the step that caused it

Sources: NACS State of the Industry (April 2026); ReFED Food Waste by Sector fact sheets, Retail and Foodservice (2024 data); CSP coverage of W. Capra’s Liza Salaria and AlixPartners’ Michael Headly. Prepared by It’s All Goods.