

PERFORMING A WASTE AUDIT

A waste audit can be broken into three phases: planning, collection, and analysis.
Let's look at these three phases and how to implement them in more detail.

Phase 1: Planning

Set goals & objectives

Why are you doing this audit? Maybe you want to cut down on paper waste or boost recycling rates. Have a clear idea of why you are performing.

Assemble a team

Gather a team of enthusiastic staff members to assist in your audit. Be sure to recruit the necessary amount of helping hands to make your audit go smoothly. Once you have a team assembled, assign roles and responsibilities.

Visual Inspection

Perform a visual inspection of the area you would like to audit and familiarize yourself with the bins and collection schedules. It can be helpful to make a list of all departments, the bins they have, and their servicing schedules.

Scope & Timeframe

Decide which areas you'll audit and for how long. Be sure to plan the audit to capture a "normal" day or week. Performing an audit right after a large event or occasion may not capture an accurate representation of typical waste generation.

Prepare Materials & Equipment

Be sure to have your health and safety and measurement tools ready for the day of your audit. In general, performing a waste audit requires the following tools:

- o Personal protective equipment (safety glasses, gloves, masks etc.,)
- o Auditing forms on a laptop or clipboard
- o Writing utensils and labels

- o Stick or trash-grabber
- o Bins or boxes for materials
- o A scale
- o A camera

Phase 2: Collection & Measurement



1. Collect the Waste You Would like to Audit

In labelled bags or bins, collect the waste from the bins you would like to audit. Label where they came from, what type of waste that bin collects and note how full the bin was at the time of collection.

2. Weigh the Waste

As a starting point, weigh the bins or bags of waste you collected using a scale, to get an idea of the total weight of waste being generated.

3. Sort the Waste and Record Your Findings

Identify and categorize the waste in the bags/bins you collected, such as paper, plastic, food scraps, e-waste etc. Record the weight and volume of each waste type on your audit forms, noting the source where possible and any notable items. You will use this data in the analysis phase.

4. Discard and Clean Up

Once you have collected, sorted, and weighed the waste you planned to audit, be sure to dispose of it appropriately and clean up your audit area.

Phase 3: Analysis

Now that you have collected all your data, you are ready to analyze your findings! Compile and organize your data into charts, tables, percentages etc., to look for patterns and trends to identify waste hot spots or isolate the specific goal you planned for. For example, are you using too much paper or too many coffee cups? Did you find a lot of recyclable items in your trash bins? Assess your current waste management practices to spot inefficiencies and identify processes that may be causing the waste generation you found.

