



Resource

DIY Waste Audit

This resource will help you to complete an inhouse waste audit to better understand how you can improve your waste habits you make a visible difference in your workplace.

Recycling is essential for businesses to reduce their environmental footprint, reduce waste disposal costs and maintain customer support as consumers become increasingly interested in sustainable business practices. Further, knowledge about your waste habits will allow you to adapt your waste system to be as effective as possible.

This resource will help you conduct an inhouse waste audit so that you can make a visible difference to your waste habits. The document is organised into several sections, complete as many that you believe are relevant to your business. However, to gain a fuller picture, we encourage you to complete them all. No matter how many you complete make sure you finalise your effort by creating an action plan.

Westpac NZ measured the waste in each liner every night, and found they have reduced waste to landfill from 70% to 30% with their Method Recycling Stations.

They have been ranked most sustainable bank globally 10 times.

Find your way around this resource

- Step 1:** Procurement Assessment
- Step 2:** Continuous Baseline Monitoring
- Step 3:** Conduct a Walkthrough
- Step 4:** Bin Audit
- Final Step:** Create an Action Plan

Other Great information you will find:

- Safety precautions
- Equipment needed
- How to engage your staff
- Further resources
- Record sheets
- What next?



This resource is suitable for any existing recycling system whether you have Method recycling stations or not. We always encourage businesses moving to Method bins to assess waste before and after adaption to see the great return on investment and reduction in environmental impact you are making.

If you are conducting the audit for certification, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification (LEED), we encourage you to

pay for a comprehensive audit through your waste provider or local waste authority.

We encourage businesses to be open about their environmental effectiveness, and providing data surrounding waste habits is an effective way to be transparent with stakeholders. Further, as Greenwashing is becoming more prevalent having facts to substantiate your efforts will validate any sustainability claims you make.

Step 1. Procurement Assessment

What goes in must come out. A first step to assessing your organisations waste is to ensure you are not purchasing products that are not recyclable. For most inefficiencies, there is a company making a sustainable solution.

Reduce: Ensure you are engaging with sustainable suppliers. Such as, does a particular supplier overdo it with plastic wrap on pallets?

Reuse: Are there single-use products that could be exchanged for reusable options?

For example, Is there a coffee supplier who will provide reusable mugs instead of single-use coffee cups?

Recycle: Check that there are not more sustainable alternatives for the products you purchase. For instance, moving to a catering service with compostable packaging.



Step 2. Continuous Baseline Monitoring

Continuous monitoring is a great way to have an ongoing understanding of your waste trends. This step is easier than any other, simply purchase appropriately sized scales for your cleaning staff and have them weigh your selected waste streams at regular intervals.

The frequency in which you weigh your waste and what streams of waste you measure is up to your better judgement. However generally speaking, the organisations that do it every day have the greatest results. We know for many businesses this may not be feasible and one a week is sufficient.

Continuous monitoring will allow you to measure things such as; waste being diverted from landfill

and identify inefficiencies continuously. If you have recently changed to Method recycling stations, this is an optimal time to implement ongoing measuring as your cleaning staff will find they spend significantly less time changing bin liners.

Using this information you can create a plan to complete the next phases of a waste audit. However, despite whether you do the following sections, ensure you create an action plan and see a visible impact from your efforts. Find out how to create an action plan at the end of the resource, as well as some ideas to engage staff.

Walkthrough Waste Audit Record

Department/Floor:
Date:
Audit Conducted by:

	Rating 1-5	Comments/Observations
Recycling bins are easily accessible (not hidden away in cupboards)		
No visible incorrectly sorted recyclables		
No visible recyclables in general waste bins		
Recycling streams near where waste is generated. i.e., paper near the printer		
What goes in each bin is easily understood at a glance		
Waste in odour free		
Staff are approx. a 10-15 second walk from a recycling station		
Bins are not over full		

Step 3. Conduct a Walkthrough

The next step to examine your businesses waste habits is to conduct a walkthrough of your premises and visually assess waste habits and the performance of your existing recycling system.

Rate each level or department on the chart on the next page; ranging on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. Be sure to make notes as you go along on areas of concern or where there is room for improvement.

As you are moving around the building speak with staff, a suggested list of questions is below. Also ask questions regarding the areas of concern you have found.

We continuously developed Method's award-winning recycling bin based on user feedback as we know if the solution does not resonate with them it will be less effective.

Read more from our co-founder Steven Korner on how we have designed with success.

Suggested questions for users:

- Do you know what we currently recycle at this facility?
- Do you find any barriers regarding recycling effectively?
- Do you know where the recycling bins are and how to sort waste effectively?
- Is there any recyclable waste you produce that we don't have receptacles for?
- Do you practice waste minimisation? i.e. using reusable containers for lunch or reusable coffee cups instead of single-use alternatives

Using this information you can create a plan to complete the next phases of a waste audit. However, if you do not complete the physical bin audit it is important to complete the final step - create an action plan. Find out how at the end of the resource as well as some ideas to engage staff.

Walkthrough Waste Audit Record

Department/ floor:

Date:

Audit Conducted by:

	Rating 1-5	Comments / Observations
Recycling bins are easily accessible (not hidden away in cupboards)		
No visible incorrectly sorted recyclables		
No visible recyclables in general waste bins		
Recycling streams near where waste is generated. I.e, paper near the printer/ organics in kitchen		
What goes in each bin is easily understood at a glance		
Waste is odour free		
Staff are approx a 10 - 15 second walk from a recycling station/ receptacle		
Bins are not over full		
Appropriate signage available in relevant places		
Streams available for the waste that is being produced		

Step 4. Bin Audit

The final step in conducting your waste audit is to measure what is going into your bins. Get a team together and set aside a couple of hours; we understand this may not be the most glamorous of obs, so we encourage you to create an event around it. For example, provide food or drinks to celebrate once you are done, and highlight the importance of the work.

If you have a larger facility you can do a cross section - randomly selecting a selection of bins from each floor to reduce the workload. However, an audit with a larger sample size will give you a better picture of your waste. Given this, if your facility is small enough to do so, you can collect waste from several days rather than just one.

A successful waste audit requires planning to make sure it goes seamlessly on the day and to ensure you record accurate data. To collect rich data, when you collect the waste from the bins record on the bag where the waste has come from and the date.

Bin Audit Record 1

Department/Floor:

Date:

On this sheet measure the quantities of each stream...

	Stream Measured by	Total Weight of stream	Weight of contaminated
Paper			
Plastic bottles			
Soft plastic			
Other plastic			
Cardboard			
Metal			
E-waste			
Organics			
Glass			
Totals			

Bin Audit Record 2

Department/Floor:

Date:

On this sheet measure the quantities of each stream...

	Stream Measured by	Total Weight of stream	Weight of contaminated
Paper			
Plastic bottles			
Soft plastic			
Other plastic			
Cardboard			
Metal			
E-waste			
Organics			
Glass			
Totals			

Some questions to consider:

- What recycling streams do you currently have?
- What recycling streams are available in your territory?
- Are there any forms of waste your facility produces in large quantities consistently?
- Are there rebates on any products in your territory?

Sorting through waste comes with some inherent risk, so please follow the precautions below. Further, please seriously consider any inherent safety risks that may be relevant to your organisation. For instance, a hospital may have sharp objects or if your organisation deals with any dangerous chemicals. If this is the case, please make sure you are prepared to control these risks or do not complete the audit yourself.

Safety precautions:

- Wear safety gloves
- Wear protective shoes, made of durable fabric, fully covering the foot
- Wear full-length pants and sleeves
- Complete the audit in a fenced off area, away from any wind

Suggested equipment:

- Tarpaulins
- Large scales - relative to the quantity of waste you have
- Pen/pencil and clipboard with our waste audit record sheets
- A clear breakdown of your territories recycling practices, what can and can not be recycled in any given stream



Some simple calculations to provide insight into your waste habits impact:

The calculations are based on 5 day work weeks, 52 weeks a year. If your facility operates differently or if you have collected waste from more than one day you will need to adapt these calculations.

1. Total waste (of any given stream) x 5 = One week's waste
2. Total waste (of any given stream) x 260 = One year's waste
3. Total contamination x 5 = One week's worth of missed opportunities
4. Total contamination x 260 = One year worth of missed opportunities

Bin Audit Record 1

Department/ floor:

Date:

On this sheet measure the quantities of each stream you currently recycle and any contamination

	Stream measured by	Total weight of stream	Weight of contaminated items	Weight of correctly recycled items	Percentage of total waste	Percentage of contamination
		KG LB	KG LB	KG LB	%	%
Paper						
Plastic bottles						
Soft plastic						
Other Plastics						
Cardboard						
Metal						
E-waste						
Organics						
Glass						
Totals						

Bin Audit Record 2

Department/ floor:

Date:

On this sheet measure the quantities of each stream you find within your general waste

	Stream measured by	Total weight of waste collected	Total weight of recycleable items	Percentage of total waste
		KG LB	KG LB	%
Paper				
Plastic bottles				
Soft plastic				
Other Plastics				
Cardboard				
Metal				
Organics				
Glass				
General Waste				
Totals				

Final step. Create an Action Plan

The information you have collected will allow you to assess areas of ineffective waste behaviours and identify areas you are doing well. Collate the data from the different departments, and you can compare waste habits.

- Are there any streams you need to introduce?
- Is contamination of any particular items prevalent and how do we better communicate about this?
- Do you need to communicate better about your recycling system?
- Are there any streams in particular users need to be re-educated on?
- Are streams placed for optimal use?
- If bins are overfull or too far from staff incorporate more stations



Canva are working hard towards a goal of carbon neutrality by 2020. We worked together to make separation even more transparent for their staff.

Problem	Solution	Person in charge	Start date	Assessment date

Think outside the box:

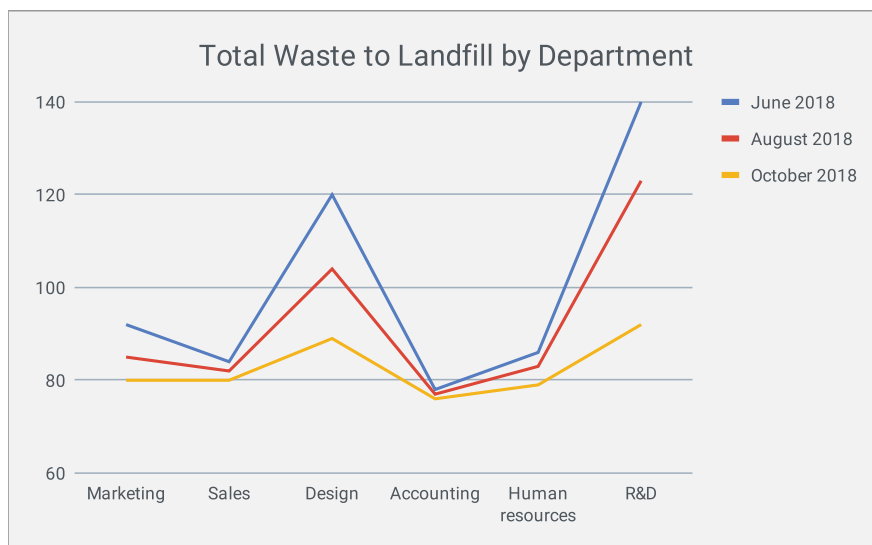
- Is there another waste service provider in your area that can enable you to add more streams?
- Can you return any recyclables for a rebate? Or donate them to a local charity
- Is your waste collection frequency sufficient?

Further resources:

- Time to get your Method Recycling solution? Use our solutions finder to find the answer for your business
- How to educate your team about recycling
- Financial study: Method bins vs individual desk bins
- Successful recycling guide
- Boost recycling with effective bin placement
- What is 'open plan recycling'?
- How clean does recycling need to be
- Why your office should recycle
- How to go waste-free with your office lunch

Sometimes engaging staff with their recycling habits can be hard here are some fun ideas:

- With the information from your waste audit create a graph and continue to monitor what department is decreasing their waste/ contamination the most. Reward areas that are improving the best.
- Company-wide best practice days - i.e. share “How to go waste-free with your office lunch” with your organisation and create an event where everyone does their best on a given day. (Giveaways or perks are often great motivators.)
- Start a ‘Green Team’ - coordinated communications from a group of passionate people can be more effective, and make sure management get involved too.
- Can you get a rebate for your recyclables? Return any funds collected to social clubs or team events to encourage better separation
- Create a recycling FAQ sheet, use the information gathered during your audit and allow staff to submit questions and answer them. Make this readily available for all staff
- Encourage staff to collect their waste in a glass jar and run a competition to see who can produce the least waste. This is a great way to create personal responsibility. See how one of our team reduced her monthly waste to a jam jar.



What Next?

Did you achieve your goals? Congratulations! Don't stop there, create bigger goals to attain and continuously grow as a sustainable organisation.

Have any more issues you want help solving, or ideas to get staff involved? Let us know! We love engaging and helping to facilitate sustainable waste practices.

Tag us @methodrecycling on all social channels, or contact us here.