How To Do A Waste Audit

Introduction

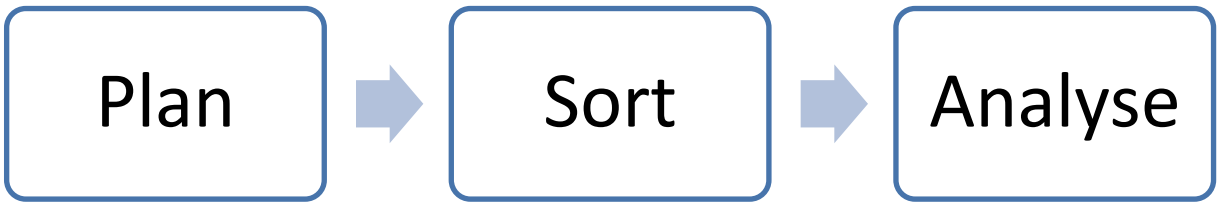
A waste audit is a process where you gather information about your waste management processes such as:

- How the waste is generated
- The types of waste generated
- The receptacles used to store the waste
- How the waste is prepared for collection
- Quantities of waste generated

You can then use this information to make your waste management processes more efficient which could result in time and cost savings.

The Waste Audit

There are 3 key stages to a waste audit:



Planning

Good planning is the foundation of any waste audit. It doesn't need to be a lengthy plan but should include:

Objective	What do you need to achieve?
Location	Where will the audit take place? Is there enough space to carry out the audit?
Health & Safety	Do you have the correct equipment for the audit e.g. safety gloves, high-visibility jackets?
Manual Handling	Will you need to lift heavy items & is it safe to do so?
Equipment	Do you have everything you need e.g. weighing scales, containers, tarpaulin?
Resource	How many people will you need to do the audit?
Notification	Do you need to inform internal personnel about the audit?
Methodology	A clear step by step method for sorting the waste (see Appendix A for an example)
Risk assessment	A risk assessment should be completed before you start

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Sorting & Data Collection

This stage is about the physical sorting and weighing of the waste. Our top tips for this stage are:

- Use your methodology as a systematic guide through the task
- Make sure you are able to take notes and record data as you go through the audit
- Choose the waste to be analysed carefully to ensure a true representation of the waste arising is achieved
- If you interview staff make sure have a way of capturing the conversation accurately e.g. dictaphone

Analysis

Once you have the data you will be able to assess it and identify where efficiency savings can be made. Your findings will largely depend on your objectives e.g.

- **Example 1**
  - Objective – reduce waste going to landfill
  - Task – identify the quantities generated and the composition of the waste
  - Findings – general waste bin included 16% card, 8% plastic bottles
  - Recommendations – install some smaller bins on site to collect plastic bottles and conduct further training for warehouse staff on where the cardboard skip is located and the value of card
- **Example 2**
  - Objective – to check internal efficiencies
  - Task – examine the receptacles used and how they are moved around site
  - Findings – card is collected in 3 x 240l wheelie bins by the doorway to area B and the bins are move by hand 3 times a day to the card skip in area F which is taking approximately 10 minutes per journey
  - Recommendations – replace 240l bins with a 1100l wheelie bin which should reduce resource required by 2/3

As you can see from the examples above, recommendations have been formulated to help achieve the specific objectives. That said you recommendations should not be limited to your original objective and if further improvements can be made then it may be appropriate to pursue these too.

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Appendix A – Example Waste Audit Methodology

Introduction

In order to understand our customers' waste flows, bin contents and opportunities to improve recycling rates, our account management team offer detailed waste audits be able to properly assess quantities of different types of waste and target waste fractions for recycling.

Although any type of bin (wheelie bin, FEL, REL, mini skip or RORO) can be assessed, where possible wheelie bins should be targeted for ease of analysis.

Resources

The following items are deemed essential for proper analysis to be conducted:

- Tarpaulin x 2
- Electronic scales
- Mixing tray
- Gloves (as a minimum level of protection these should be thorn proof)
- Hi-visibility vest or jacket
- Safety boots
- Pen, paper and clip board
- Bin bags
- Tissue paper
- Baby wipes
- Broom and shovel
- Hand cleaner

Methodology

Our analysis of waste is conducted in 9 stages:

Stage	Instructions
Stage 1	Assess the site to find the most suitable area to empty a bin. The area should be away from site operations, safe from moving vehicles and where possible made of hard standing
Stage 2	To keep the working area separate from site operations, where sufficient space exists place a parked car between the bins and the main operational area with hazard lights on.
Stage 3	Assess the bins on site and choose one bin to empty. This should be a full bin; where more than one full bin

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	exists, choose the bin at random. Move the chosen bin to the work area.
Stage 4	Lay down two tarpaulins side by side. Weigh the corners of the tarpaulins down with any heavy items available on site such as pallets, trays, bricks etc.
Stage 5	Place the mixing tray near the bin. Place the electronic scales on this mixing tray. The electronic scales operate by pressure on the feet of the scales, and as such it is important that the mixing tray is used to provide a solid, flat surface to enable correct operation of the scales.
Stage 6	In order to contain the waste on the scales find a tray such as a bread tray or similar and place on the scales before powering on. The scales will self-zero.
Stage 7	Empty the waste from the bin onto the tarpaulin.
Stage 8	Categorise the waste into types of waste such as food waste, recyclables (can be sub-categorised into card, paper, plastic etc.), general waste etc. Where categorising general waste, contents should be noted. Each type of waste should be weighed and noted.
Stage 9	Refill the bin with the waste. Clean down the tarpaulins with the tissue paper and baby wipes where appropriate. Sweep the area to leave clean and tidy.