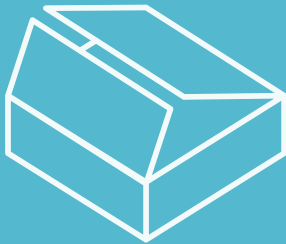


Step 1: Assemble a team and set a date.

- Find a volunteer from each department to form your waste auditing team. If you're a small office, consider gathering all of your employees to make it a fun learning experience.
- Once you have a team, pick a week for your audit. You want a clear picture of your normal trash output, so pick a week without any special events and when most of your staff will be in the office.

Step 2: Determine your waste categories.

- Make a list of the most common trash types your business produces. If the audit reveals more categories, you can always add them to your list as you go.
- Common waste audit categories:
 - Paper
 - Cardboard
 - Plastic bottles
 - Other plastic
 - Aluminum cans
 - Glass
 - Food waste
 - Materials packaging
 - Signage
 - Display materials



Step 3: Gather your tools.

- Before the event, you'll need to gather supplies to make sure your team can work safely. You'll also want to find an open area for sorting the trash during the audit.
 - Rubber gloves for each volunteer.
 - Face masks for each volunteer.
 - Tongs for each volunteer (optional).
 - Labelled boxes for sorting each waste category.
 - A bathroom scale for weighing each category.
 - Clipboards for recording your findings.

Step 4: Sort your trash.

- At the end of the week, round up all the trash and recycling from your building.
- If you'd like to gather department-specific data, label each trash bag with the department it came from.
- Weigh all the trash to get a baseline for how much you throw out each week.
- Weigh all the recyclables to establish how much you recycle each week.
- Wearing gloves, sort all materials into the boxes for their categories. If you labelled your trash by department, make sure each has separate boxes.
- As you work, note any recyclables mixed in with trash.
- Once everything has been sorted, weigh each category.

Step 5: Analyze your results.

- Calculate and record your waste diversion rate using this process:
 - Divide the weight of your recyclables by the combined weight of all your waste (trash + recyclables).
 - Multiply the result by 100.
 - This gives you the percentage of waste you divert from the landfill each week.
- Look at the weights you recorded for individual waste categories.
 - Which categories are highest?
 - Did the highest categories differ between departments?
 - Did you find any recyclables mixed in with the trash?
 - Were there categories you didn't realize you had?

You can use the numbers from your waste audit to look at areas within your waste stream where you can divert waste from the landfill. Is 30% of your waste food scraps and other biodegradable waste like paper towels? Consider composting! Are you only recycling 40% of the recyclable materials you create? Then perhaps invest in some recycling education to better train your staff on what's recyclable. You may be surprised by how much of your office waste that you can divert from the landfill!

Don't lose track of this waste audit report. As you take steps to reduce waste, these numbers will become a powerful marketing tool you can use to show customers how hard you're working at greening your operation.