

# Waste Audit 101



## ❓ What is a waste audit?

- A waste audit is a systematic review of the waste an organization generates. It helps identify opportunities to reduce waste, improve diversion, and optimize waste management practices.

***The more you know, the better you can “throw”.***

## ❓ Why conduct a waste audit?

### 💲 Financial Savings

Waste disposal can be costly. Audits reveal inefficiencies, helping you cut unnecessary services and pay only for what you need.

### 🌐 Environmental Benefits

Understanding your waste stream enables greater recycling and composting, reducing landfill contributions and environmental impact.

### 👍 Regulatory Compliance

Many communities have waste regulations. Audits help ensure you're subscribed to the right services and remain compliant.

### 💡 Informed Decision-Making

Accurate data guides service adjustments, vendor choices, and future waste reduction strategies.

## ❓ How do I conduct a waste audit?

- These steps can help you have a productive and effective waste audit.

### 🌐 Define Scope & Purpose

*Clarify why you're conducting the audit—compliance, waste reduction, or service optimization. Determine the scope:*

- Which departments will be included?
- What time frame will be measured (day, week, month)?
- Will all waste streams be analyzed?



## Helpful Supplies

Waste sorting supplies may be beneficial in safely conducting your audit.

Gloves	Scale	Garbage Bags	Tongs
Aprons	Tarps	Garbage Bins/Buckets	



## Collect & Sort Waste

Gather waste from the selected areas and timeframe. Sort materials into categories such as:

- Recyclables (paper, plastics, glass, metals)
- Compostables (food scraps, biodegradable packaging)
- Waste-to-energy materials
- Hazardous waste (batteries, e-waste, fluorescent bulbs)



## Weigh & Analyze Your Data

Record and weigh each category. Count common items (e.g., “100 coffee cups,” “50 take-out containers”) for more precise insights. Consider calculating percentages, such as:

- 45% recyclables
- 20% compostables
- 35% landfill/waste-to-energy

Key questions:

- What items are most common?
- Which departments generate the most waste?
- How much contamination is in recycling or compost bins?
- What could be diverted into another system?



## Take Action

Use your data to create a tailored waste reduction plan:

- Replace single-use items with durable alternatives
- Subscribe to organics collection if food waste is significant
- Improve recycling signage and staff training
- Work with suppliers to reduce packaging
- Reassess services after 1-2 months, then periodically, to ensure efficiency