

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