



Office +250 862 8941
Toll Free +800 469 7830
Email info@greentourismcanada.ca
Web www.greentourismcanada.ca

How to conduct your own waste audit

A waste audit helps you measure the different types of waste generated at your organization. The results will help you determine an approximate waste volume, weight, and composition, as well as identify opportunities to improve your waste management initiatives and allow you to compare your performance to best practices and other similar organizations. This guide provides you with a step-by-step process for conducting a waste audit at your organization.

WASTE AUDIT GOALS

1. Identify and measure the composition of your organization's waste stream
2. Develop a "baseline" for measuring and tracking your organization's waste stream
3. Help you set specific targets for waste reduction and diversion
4. Assist you to prioritize waste reduction and waste diversion initiatives
5. Enable you to report your waste volume/weight accurately
6. Provide an eye-opening learning experience for members of your organization

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT- RECOMMENDED

- Protective coverall suits for each participant (or aprons and disposable shoe covers)
- Latex/nitrile gloves for every participant
- Puncture proof gloves for extra protection and Clear goggles or safety glasses (optional)
- First aid attendant on site/nearby
- Bins for each sorting category
- Recycling bags, clear bags, garbage bags for sorting (known volume)
- Tarp(s)
- Weigh Scale
- Clipboards/pen
- Waste audit data sheets and sorting list
- Signs for waste types. These should include important information about each category, images to help identify the types of materials that can be placed in the bin, and a list of examples of what is/is not included.
- Signage for "waste audit in progress" (optional)
- Brooms/mops for cleanup
- Camera to take photos of the audit

WASTE AUDIT PROCEDURES

1. Decide how will the information learned from this audit be used
2. Determine how the audit will be advertised.
3. Check with your Regional District, City or waste hauler to find out your waste collection requirements
4. Coordinate where/how will waste be stored during sample period
5. Select a sample time period (one to three days to a week of waste should be enough)
6. Choose a location for your waste audit to take place. This should be a large area where the tarp can be set up. It should take 2-3 hours to complete.
7. Ask for help from your custodial staff to manage spills or any major messes created during the audit (if applicable)
8. Assemble a team of volunteers to help with the waste audit. Have them review this document before you begin the audit.



Office +250 862 8941
Toll Free +800 469 7830
Email info@greentourismcanada.ca
Web www.greentourismcanada.ca

9. Determine how the sorted waste will be disposed of/diverted at the end of the audit

SET-UP

1. Lie out tarp(s) and set up bins with sorting category signs. Know bin volume or line bins with clear bags of known volume. Set up any other signage.
2. Use area signs to identify waste streams
3. Garbage is moved to respective areas on tarps. Clear bags to identify bag contents before opening are ideal
4. Collect data on waste before auditing (number of bags, origin (if applicable) and type of each waste stream).
5. Record the empty weights of each type of bin you're using so you can subtract this from the total weights later in the audit

CONDUCT WASTE AUDIT

1. All participants arrive and put on protective gear
2. The purpose and procedure explained to all participants
3. Volunteers sort waste into categories. Empty out bags into tarp, or separate volunteers into small teams and each team sorts through one bag at a time. *Safety tip: do not blindly reach hand into garbage bag. Make sure you can see what you are reaching for*
4. Separate waste by category and place it in the corresponding bin. Identify if mistakes have been made (items in the wrong bin)
5. Weigh each bin and estimate volume. Record results on your data sheet. Take photos of each category.

10. Make sure you have the correct number of bins for each waste type

6. Repeat steps 3-5 for each waste stream you are auditing (ie. garbage, recycling, compost, etc).
7. Take photos of complete audit results.

CLEAN UP

1. Dispose or divert sorted waste as appropriate.
2. Dispose of all used coveralls, shoe covers, and gloves. Collect aprons in a bag for laundry (if applicable)
3. Dispose of any un-audited bags of garbage.
4. Clean tarps and surrounding area.

AFTER THE WASTE AUDIT

1. Compile all the data. Calculate the percentage of each type of waste collected
2. Create a report with a data summary. Determine recommendations for improvement
3. Answer the following questions about your office's waste practices:
 - a. How much total waste is created? (volume/weight)
 - b. Which materials are/are not recyclable?
 - c. Where are the biggest opportunities for minimizing material and increasing diversion?
 - d. Where are the biggest areas of improvement (such as what are the most typical "mistakes" that employees make in disposing their waste materials – for example, paper towels/tissues in paper recycling when they should be put in the compostable bin)?

RESOURCES

NOTE: For waste not collected by waste haulers

You may find that your waste hauler does not collect some waste (such as batteries, discarded electronics and medical waste), but designated staff may collect and dispose of these materials. You can still track how much of these products you collect. Record approximate weight and set up a tally table located in visible areas close to where these types of discarded materials are placed to aid measurement and tracking. Include these numbers in your overall waste stream data.

Multi Material BC – Detailed Materials List: <http://recyclinginbc.ca/program/mmbc-materials-list/>

Recycling Council of British Columbia (RCBC): <http://www.rcbc.ca/>

Metro Vancouver: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/Pages/default.aspx>



Office +250 862 8941
Toll Free +800 469 7830
Email info@greentourismcanada.ca
Web www.greentourismcanada.ca

City of Vancouver – Food Scrap Haulers: <http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/list-of-food-scrap-haulers.aspx>