

The Business of Recycling Wales: Waste Audit Guide

A step-by-step guide on undertaking a waste audit

1. Gather your equipment

You will need:

- a tarpaulin or plastic sheet to tip waste out onto for sorting
- appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as identified via a risk assessment (to protect you and your clothes)
- containers for sorting the waste into
- weighing equipment
- a pen and a form to record your findings

You should produce a risk assessment before undertaking a waste audit to ensure that all risks have been considered and mitigated i.e. manual handling. Ensure that all relevant colleagues are properly briefed on the task before starting the audit including your Health & Safety officer or team.

2. Collect your waste

Gather your waste - include general waste, all recyclables and kitchen waste and waste from litter bins if applicable.

You need to collect the waste for a set period, so if your waste is collected weekly then the best time to undertake your audit is the day before your waste is collected, giving you a week's worth of material. Thus, allowing you to easily calculate your monthly and annual output. If your waste is collected daily, arrange for a day's worth of waste to be held back for you for the audit.

3. Sorting

Tip the waste onto your tarpaulin/plastic sheet and sort it into the different material types using your sorting containers. Use the waste audit template as a guide when deciding the number of different material types.

4. Measuring

Weigh each type of waste, remembering to deduct the weight of the container to arrive at the net weight of the material. This is your 'net weight'.

5. Recording

Record the date, time and location of your audit and the weights of each material into your form.

6. Repeat x2

Where possible it's a good idea to repeat the audit (steps 2-5) twice more (three times altogether) and average your totals. This will provide a more accurate picture of the types and quantities of waste and recycling produced.

7. Results

Using the average net weight for each material stream, calculate your annual waste and recycling total. Calculate your annual waste production, for example by multiplying by 52 if you have measured by the week.

Waste Audit Template

Site:		
Date & time:		
Sample Number:		
Material:	KGs	Further description
Paper		
Card		
Plastic <i>(bottles, pots, tubs & trays)</i>		
Metals <i>(drinks cans & food tins)</i>		
Cartons including coffee cups		
Glass <i>(bottles & jars)</i>		
Food waste <i>(leftovers, uneaten food, tea bags etc.)</i>		
Unsold Textiles		
Unsold small WEEE		
Other wastes:		
Non-recyclable wastes		
TOTAL		Comments: