

Waste Audit

Why do a waste audit?

The aim of this activity is to find out the amount and make up of waste generated at the school.

Large quantities of waste are generated every day in a school. Much of this waste is unnecessary and could be re-used or recycled. It is important to work out exactly how much and what sort of waste does the school generate and this will give valuable data. From this data the school can develop a plan to reduce the waste to landfill.

If the waste audit reveals that most of the waste stream is made up of packaging then the school can develop strategies to reduce the amount of packaging coming into the school. If the waste is mainly paper then perhaps a campaign of re-use and recycling paper would be appropriate. If the waste is mainly organics then the school could consider a worm farm or perhaps some chooks (depending on the type being generated).



Preparation

- Pick a day for the audit.
- A “typical” day will give best results. For example if the canteen is only open one day a week, don’t audit that day’s waste as it won’t be indicative of your school’s normal waste stream, also avoid collecting waste from days such as a sport day.
- Don’t choose a Monday because waste would have to be kept over the weekend.

On the day:

- Lay out a tarp for sorting waste.
- Line up labelled buckets on the tarp (Have extra buckets and labels ready in case a lot of one waste stream is being found).
- Set up desks and chairs for Recorders.

- Place the scales on a flat surface.

Equipment

Tongs, masks, thick gloves, glasses, suitable sturdy footwear, scales, tarpaulin, labelled buckets, (aprons and goggles if desired) data collection sheets, writing implements and some empty playground garbage bins. A dust-pan and brush and a broom are useful to have handy.

Several Environmental Education Centres have waste audit kits available.



HAND WASHING FACILITIES, DISINFECTANT, SUNSCREEN, HATS AND FIRST AID KITS ARE ESSENTIAL.

Method

- Divide the audit team into 4 groups (weighers, sorters, recorders, monitors)
- Hand out Job Cards
- Organisers bring waste and recycling from storage, classrooms and offices to the audit area.
- Reinforce safety considerations with the audit team and ensure they are wearing sunscreen, hats, gloves and lace-up or slip-on shoes or boots.
- Emphasise that GLOVES AND TONGS ONLY are to touch waste.
- If anyone sees glass, sharps, bees or any other potentially dangerous items they should move away and report it to the Audit Leader.
- Audit Leaders to run through procedures according to 'Job Cards'.
- Start sorting waste and continue to sort, weigh and record until all waste and recycling has been measured.
- Swap jobs so everyone experiences different roles (if desired).
- Record results

Waste Audit – Data Collection Sheet

Name of School _____

Date of Audit _____

	Gross Weight (kg) = bucket weight plus waste weight	Bucket Wt. (kg)	Net Weight (kg) = gross weight minus bucket weight	Approx. Volume (L) eg. 20L bucket or 240L wheelie bin	Origin of waste eg. Did the waste come from the playground or a classroom?
Mixed waste eg. chip packets, plastic wrap, textiles, ceramics					
Recyclable containers eg: Pet Bottles (1) HDPE Bottles (2) Liquid paperboard (poppers) Steel cans & metals Aluminium cans					

	Gross Weight (kg) = bucket weight plus waste weight	Bucket Wt. (kg)	Net Weight (kg) = gross weight minus bucket weight	Approx. Volume (L) eg. 20L bucket or 240L wheelie bin	Origin of waste eg. Did the waste come from the playground or a classroom
Organic Material Paper and cardboard					
Other Organic Material eg: food and garden waste, soiled paper					

Waste audit results tables

Table 1: Results of Solid Waste Audit (Weights)

Type of Waste	Weight (kg)				Subtotal	% of Total
	Recess	Lunch	Rooms*	Collected for Recycling		
Paper and Cardboard						
Other Organic Material						
Recyclable Containers						
Mixed Waste						
Total						

Table 2: Waste Projections

School Population	students and staff
Total Waste Generated	kg per day
	kg per week
	tonnes per year (40 weeks)
Waste Generated per Person	kg per person per year
	kg per person per term
	kg per person per week
	gm per person per day

Table 1: Results of Solid Waste Audit (Volume)

Type of Waste	Volume (No. Buckets)				Subtotal	% of Total
	Recess	Lunch	Rooms*	Collected for Recycling		
Paper and Cardboard						
Other Organic Material						
Recyclable Containers						
Mixed Waste						
Total						

The information above can be entered into an excel spreadsheet and used to create pie charts and bar graphs to display of your results.