



How To Conduct A Waste Audit

What is a waste audit and why conduct one?

A waste audit is a formal, structured process used to quantify the amount of waste generated by an organization. Information collected from an audit will help identify current waste management practices and ways they can be improved through recycling and waste reduction. By designing a more efficient waste disposal program, your business can increase the amount of paper, plastic, and metals that it recycles, which reduces air and water pollution, helps curb global warming, conserves natural resources and help keep taxes low.

How do you do an audit?

Depending on your organization's needs, Ijams Nature Center can offer consultations regarding auditing. In order to create an accurate representation of your waste stream and recycling efforts, consider performing additional waste audits through out the year. The following steps can help ensure a successful waste audit.

1. Ensure proper safety by providing thick non latex gloves to collectors and sorters.
2. Ensure proper confidentiality measures for collection of sensitive materials. Several organizations shred these documents before collection.
3. Building managers and custodial staff are crucial to a successful waste audit. They can assist in gathering the materials and can provide helpful information regarding the logistics about recycling and waste management practices.
4. Keep the date and time of the audit a secret. This will help ensure that the waste you collect is a true representative sample. If people are informed of the audit in advance, they may increase their recycling or waste reduction habit thus skew the audit.
5. Collect waste. Gather all waste from offices and common areas. Biohazards need to be excluded from the collection.
6. Sort waste into three categories: recycling, recyclable materials found in trash, and true trash.
7. Publicize results and make recommendations to increase waste reduction.