

Set Up a Program to Manage Your Waste

Getting started can sometimes be the most challenging part of recycling. However, if the project is tackled strategically and with enthusiasm remarkable results are achievable.

Before changing a waste reduction program, consider the following recommendations. It is important to remember that monitoring and reviewing the program are equally as important as setting it up.

1. Put someone in charge.

- An organized and enthusiastic team leader can oversee the steps to follow to get the program going.
- Setting up a “Green Team” can also be effective. A “Green Team” could consist of representatives from different departments or areas in the business. For example, creating a team of administrative staff, custodial staff, and managers.
- The person in charge or the “Green Team” can handle any questions, suggestions or concerns.

2. Find out what’s in your garbage.

- The only way to really dispose of your garbage properly is to know what’s in it. Conducting a simplified waste audit will give you a starting point to determine what types of materials should be included in your waste disposal strategy. [Waste audit form](#) (see **Step 2** on webpage).
- If you are interested in having a more scientific look at what is in your waste, or are a large business, you may benefit from hiring a private consulting company to perform a professional waste audit.
- If you decide to hire a consultant to assist with the audit, do your homework; find out who can provide you with the most complete services within your price range.
- If you decide to conduct the audit yourself, here are some additional items to help familiarize you with your waste:
 - Where is waste created onsite – staff rooms, lobbies, shipping/receiving docks, offices, common areas?
 - Are garbage/recycling receptacles easily accessible and conveniently located? Are they properly labelled?
 - Are garbage bins located next to recycling bins (if applicable)?
 - Is there garbage in the recycling bins or recycling in your garbage bins?
 - Do the bins appear to be emptied too often or not often enough?
 - Where does your garbage and recycling go when the receptacles are emptied?
- Walk outside and check:
 - How many collection bins are on the property?
 - What size are the collection bins?
 - How many times per week/month is the garbage and/or recycling collected?
 - How full or how empty is your garbage/recycling dumpsters or carts on collection day?
 - Could you rent a smaller bin or get your bin picked up less often to reduce costs?
 - Could you share a bin with neighbouring buildings or businesses?
 - Are there obvious recyclables in your garbage bin and/or obvious garbage in the recycling or cardboard bin?

3. Design a program that works for you.

- Based on your audit you will be able to determine which materials you may want collected from your business by a private hauler and which may be more efficient to drop off at a collection facility or a depot by a designated staff member.
- Contact your current hauler; research other options:

- Many haulers are willing to work with you to build a waste collection system that meets your needs – find out if your current hauler can tailor a program for your specific waste disposal requirements. [See list of important questions to ask your hauler](#) (see **Step 3** on webpage).
- Look into what other collection companies are offering. Garbage collection is like any other competitive business each company may offer something slightly different from their competitors. Be sure to do your research and find out who can offer you the best product for the best price. See list of Waste Collection Companies in the [Banned Materials Disposal Directory](#) (see link under **Step 1** on webpage).
- The key to success is convenience; keep your program simple and clean. The bins should be easy to find and clearly labelled.
- Have custodial staff or your “Green Team” ensure that the bins are taken care of and emptied when required.

4. Educate the staff or residents.

- Awareness and education are the cornerstones to a successful program. Keep staff or residents posted on the progress of the program and any changes that occur.
- Hold an orientation session at the beginning of the program and be sure to provide feedback on its successes. Information that should be included in the orientation includes:
 - What materials can and cannot be recycled
 - How the materials should be prepared (sorted into appropriate bins or all mixed together in one bin, etc)
 - When the recycling program will start
 - Where the recycling stations will be located
 - When the recyclables will be picked up or if volunteers are needed to bring recyclables to the appropriate depots
- Meet with your janitor(s) and educate them about your recycling program. Ask them to report periodically to your Green Team waste coordinator on the recycled content that they notice in your garbage. Similarly, when they handle your recyclables, ask them to watch for garbage in it and report to you so that the problem can be corrected at the source.
- Contact the [Waste Reduction Office](#) if you would like assistance in educating staff or residents on how to use your new recycling program or to have a site visit to review your program once it is set up.

5. Start the program.

- Launch the program with a kick-off event to motivate staff and introduce your “green team”.
- Ensure that bins are recognizable and uniform with clear instructions on what materials belong in them and placed in convenient locations.
- Respond quickly to any problems or questions about the program.
- Be sure to tell your customers and use the program as a way to increase your public profile.

6. Monitor the program.

- Ensure bins are emptied regularly to assure greater participation.
- Watch for contamination in the bins and remind staff or residents of what can and cannot go in them.
- Determine the reason for contamination (i.e., bins moved, bins not emptied, lack of awareness) and eliminate the cause.

7. Review and expand the program.

- Monitor results of the program to determine if changes are required.
- Amend the program as needed (i.e., increase educational activities, add more bins). Recycling can become a habit within one week, but the habit may be fragile.
- Keep participation high by updating staff on the successes of the program and ensuring the bins are neat and tidy.

Quick Tips to Reduce Waste in your Workplace

- Make double-sided copies whenever possible.
- Reuse envelopes, file folders, binders and other office supplies.
- Use fax sticky notes instead of coversheets.
- Use unwanted or used paper print draft reports or to make note pads.
- Circulate memos and reports electronically rather than making new copies.
- Save documents on hard drives or disks instead of making copies.
- Close the loop – buy products with recycled content.
- Order merchandise in bulk to reduce packaging waste.
- Work with suppliers to minimize the packaging used to ship their products.
- Reuse received boxes or packaging for outgoing shipments.