

Know Your Waste

Now that you know what materials are banned from disposal in the garbage, you need to determine if they are part of your waste stream.

This worksheet provides a basic framework for conducting a simplified waste audit at your business or building complex. There are two options for conducting a simple waste audit.

Option 1 – Walk through each area of your business at the end of the day before garbage and/or recyclables are collected; rate the quantity of items you see in each of the categories listed in the table below. If you have a recycling program in place, be sure to look in recycling containers as well. Repeat this process over a few days to get a sense of the quantity and type of waste produced.

Option 2 - Collect all waste over a three-day period in clear bags. If you have a recycling program, include recyclables but bag separately from garbage can waste. At the end of three days look at the waste collected in each bag. By turning and shaking the bags you should be able to rate the quantity of items for each category listed in the table below.

Use a 1 – 5 rating scale (1 = not abundant and 5 = very abundant). If you do not produce a certain item at your site, write Not Applicable (N/A).

Use the completed table to develop a waste management plan or provide the information to a waste collection company so they can assist in developing a waste management plan for your business.

Category of Waste	Rating 1-5
BANNED MATERIALS	
Aluminum and Metal Food Containers	
Asphalt and Concrete	
Batteries (all types)	
Beverage Containers (pop cans, glass, plastic bottles)	
Cardboard/Boxboard	
Cell Phones	
Drywall	
Electronic Equipment (TV's, stereos, telephones, computers, cameras, video equip, etc)	
Hazardous Waste (fluorescent bulbs, paint, pesticides, oil and oil filters, pharmaceuticals, thermostats, flammable liquids, antifreeze, solvents)	
Metal (including any materials that have large metal components)	
Paper (magazines, office paper, newspaper/flyers)	
Plastic Containers (including disposable plastic cups)	
Plastic Film (empty plastic bags, pallet wrap, stretchy plastic)	
Small Appliances (any countertop appliances)	
Tires	
Wood (clean – unpainted plywood, off-cuts, raw lumber)	
Yard Waste	