

An informal waste audit you can do today

The best way to start your informal waste audit is to carry out a simple review of your company. Look at what you are throwing in your bins now and what you have to dispose of from your business. This can be done by someone within your own business (nominate a green champion if you like).

Carrying out the review...

What to do:

Pick an 'average' day in your business, when things are working normally. Don't announce that you are doing a waste audit – it is best to see the worst case scenario. Walk round the premises. Take a camera and rubber gloves (just in case). Note anything that is not contained in bins or that is a health hazard. Note overflowing bins. Note appropriate signage. Note if some departments are better than others.

Ask yourself:

What do we want to achieve environmentally?

How long are we going to monitor the waste for?

What do we already recycle?

What sorts of things are going in the bin?

How much is going in the bin?

From this, what can be recycled?

Are there specific things that we need to dispose of through specialised sources because of the type of business we run?

Are the systems in place to recycle what you want to recycle? Are signs in order to make it obvious?

Are there enough containers or bins/separate bins for what is needed?

Who is going to take responsibility for waste management?

When you have the answers, put the data into some sort of order:

Which departments are seeing the most waste? Don't forget all areas and departments, and the back office functions as well, management, sales, canteen (if you have one) etc.

Why is the waste being generated?

Are employees aware of the recycling policies and are they doing it in practice? Do they need training – even if informally?

Is it easy for them to recycle from their workstation/machine?

How often are we going to monitor to make sure changes are working?

Note what can be reused, recycled, composted, donated to others, or is really 'waste'.

Set up regular collections/disposal.

Free, downloadable reminder signs are available on www.greensolutionsmag.co.uk

