



A waste audit is usually established at the property level, although it is possible to combine an audit across multiple sites, and a program of waste audits is often undertaken at a portfolio level.

A property manager will most often be responsible for coordinating the audit process, with information and support provided by a facilities manager. The various audit outcomes will be of interest to all stakeholders, including asset managers.

The process of undertaking a waste audit should take place within a wider framework for the governance of audit and assurance activities, and should include the following steps:



STEP 1: ESTABLISH AUDIT OVERSIGHT AND SCOPE

It is important that a forum, committee or body is established to provide oversight of the audit process, to validate outcomes, and to check that recommended actions are allocated appropriately.

Determining the audit scope should involve consideration of a number of issues, including:

- Is it beneficial to include waste generated and managed by occupiers. For example, stores within a shopping centre, as well as the property managed services?
- What waste types will be included. For example, will hazardous waste and food waste be included alongside general waste?

The frequency of waste audits is also relevant. In determining frequency, it may be useful to consider the annual waste disposal spend, as well as current waste management performance, based on reported recycling rates and tonnage of residual waste produced. As a rule of thumb, sites can be broken down by annual spend as follows:

- <£5,000 per year: Low priority; to be considered once Medium and High priority sites have been assessed.
- £5,000-£20,000 per year: Medium priority; recommend an annual on-site audit.
- +£20,000 per year: High priority; recommend a quarterly on-site audit.



STEP 2: SECURING A COMPETENT WASTE AUDITOR

While there are no mandated qualifications or accreditations to undertake a waste audit, the individual undertaking the assessment should have knowledge and experience appropriate to the audit's scope.

As a minimum, a waste auditor should have experience in relation to waste management, the property and equipment type involved, and the processes and arrangements involved in audit and assurance activities.

If waste related infrastructure, plant and supply contracts are included in the scope, specialist industry equipment and knowledge may be necessary.

When considering contracting a third party to undertake the audit on their behalf, a property manager should consider:

- Specialist auditors offer fee structures based on either a fixed up-front fee, or a share of savings basis.
 - If the fixed fee structure is used, it is feasible that no opportunities will be identified, and the costs will not yield savings.

- If the share of savings structure is used, if substantial savings are identified, you may end up paying more than under a fixed fee structure.
 - Clients will need to be engaged to confirm where the payment of these services will come from. Clients may, for example, accept a fixed fee structure to be paid out of non-recoverable funds in the event that the service yields no benefit, but that it is paid out of service charge if the savings exceed the outlay.
- Some waste service providers offer waste audits, and some may also offer a personalised waste management package.



STEP 3: REVIEW WASTE PROFILE

The preparation of a property's waste profile is a central output of a waste audit. This should include, as a minimum, total waste consumption by weight, broken down by waste type and source.

The waste profile should be compared against historical trends, with the intention of identifying the areas of greatest consumption and anomalies in expected waste generation.



STEP 4: REVIEW WASTE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Performance against historical waste targets should be reviewed to determine the extent that progress towards intended improvements is on track.

Alongside this, a waste audit should check that management arrangements, such as processes to monitor and review waste consumption, or to check that recommended actions from previous waste audits are being deployed. There should be evidence that such arrangements are in place and are being implemented.

Waste processing equipment and signage

A review of the availability and type of waste processing equipment should include:

- Compactors or bailers which can be used to increase efficiency of waste removal and reduce transportation costs.
- Appropriate number of bins for the volume of waste.
- Access control to waste areas (restricted to personnel trained in site waste management or lockable skips to prevent fly tipping).

Signage is of specific importance where streams have been identified as having a high percentage of contamination rate, for example greater than 15%. Signage should be reviewed to ensure:

- It clearly identifies waste streams and corresponds with signage at point of disposal within demarcated areas.
- Identify whether the signage is fit for purpose, if illustrations are used, check they represent the types of waste you would expect to see from the buildings.
- Give consideration that English may not be the first language of those using waste facilities and translations may be required for labeling of waste areas.

STEP 5: IDENTIFY WASTE OPPORTUNITIES

A key component of a waste audit is to identify opportunities to improve waste management. This is partly informed through the analysis of a property's waste profile and is complemented by general observation of equipment and operational practices.

Alongside opportunities to reduce waste, a waste audit may also consider opportunities to improve wider waste management activities. For example, the metering arrangements for recording and collating waste data, or how waste minimisation awareness raising is undertaken.

Data arrangements

- ✓ Are we recording waste data?
- ✓ What are we doing with the collated data?



Waste minimisation

- ✓ How can we increase awareness?
- ✓ How do we monitor change?

STEP 6: REVIEW AND CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

The outcomes from a waste audit, including recommended improvement actions, should be documented and reviewed by the oversight body. An action plan should set out improvement opportunities alongside timeframes and responsibilities and should inform the development of waste targets.

Ongoing waste generation, progress against targets and the implementation of action plans should be periodically reviewed by the oversight body, or an appropriate forum with responsibility for a property's waste or environmental management activities.

STEP 7: DATA COLLECTION AND ACCURACY

Measuring the success of improvements undertaken as part of a waste audit relies on having accurate data. To enable this, the scope of a waste audit should look at the availability and accuracy of a site's waste data. This includes:

- Consistency of volume to weight conversions where estimates are used.
- Standardisation in the way waste data is collected and reported by waste management service providers, and in turn how a property or facilities manager reports data to an asset manager.
- That the data reflects general assumptions or expectations of the weight norms. For example, food waste and glass should be the heaviest stream, and cardboard should be the lightest.