

## Job Corps Solid Waste Audit Guidelines

A waste audit determines:

1. How much center waste *could* be recycled;
2. How much waste *is* being recycled; and
3. How much waste is going into local landfills or incinerators.

In brief, one day's worth of trash and recycling will be measured and reported. A follow up recycling policy and program is highly recommended, but not required at this time.

The Audit procedure can use the following suggested guidelines.

### **1. Research**

Find the best recycling options in your area. What options does or could your waste contractor have? Will you need separate bins for recycling? Will you separate glass, metal, paper, cardboard, etc., or is it "co-mingled" (together). How will you need to separate it? Can your contractor provide data on how much is already being recycled and how much is going into the landfill?

### **2. Designate an Audit Team; Get Ready for the Audit / Separation / Measurement Day**

Consider involving members from all areas of the center community, including staff and students. If you have one, the center's "green team" is a great resource. Make sure the audit team can commit sufficient time, usually a few hours to the project. Decide if the amount audited is for a day, a couple days or a week. Be sure you have agreement on what can be recycled and what cannot be.

### **3. Gather Supplies**

Safety is of primary importance. Equip the team so this work can be done safely. Remember to wear old clothes, long pants, long sleeves and closed shoes. Use durable gloves (not latex or rubber gloves); eye protection and face masks are also needed. Keeping a first aid kit nearby is a good precaution. You will need a separation strategy, which may require boxes, durable plastic sheeting or tarps, brooms, shovels and heavy-duty trash bags. If you will be separating by weight you will need scales.

### **4. The Audit, Separation and Measuring**

The actual waste audit separation is the fun part. Make it an event. You will be taking a day's worth of trash that usually goes into the dumpster(s) and separating it into the different "streams" to enable measurement. Measurement can be by weight or volume. Most audits will obtain three separate "streams." These are: mixed (glass, plastic, and metal), paper (cardboard, paper, magazines, etc.), and garbage/trash. A more refined audit will contain measures for light bulbs, batteries, compost, clothing, and durable goods (such as old printers or monitors). Your audit might be different based on your local recycling opportunities. Invite everyone at the center to visit the audit if they are not actually helping. Be sure to take pictures.

If you are already recycling you will also need to measure how much is recycled, while also measuring how much that *can* be recycled is in your garbage (landfill) stream.

## 5. Reporting (see template)

A short report describing the audit procedure and summarizing the results is needed. This report would include:

- Total amount of waste examined during the audit (by weight or volume), including the following sub-totals for each waste type:
  - Amount currently being recycled
  - Amount currently going to landfill
  - Amount currently going to landfill that *could* be recycled
- Notable findings and recommendations
- Pictures of the separation methods used

## 6. Diversion Improvement Opportunities and Ongoing Measurement

During the audit, you will get a good idea of where improvement can happen. This will inform your next step: writing and implementing a center recycling policy and plan.

Usually ongoing waste-stream audits will not be practical. However, a follow up audit is a recommended after your recycle program has been operating. Having one annually (to keep track of how you are doing) is also a good practice. If possible, get statements from your recycling and waste contractor(s) that summarize how much was recycled and how much went to a landfill or incinerator for a given period. (These statements should be reviewed by your green committee.)

## 7. Source Reduction Opportunities and Strategy

The key goal for Federal facilities recycling is that your center diverts *at least* 50 percent of its waste from going to a landfill. A strategy should establish a goal for *exceeding* that minimum. After the audit, how much would it be possible to recycle? 75 percent ... 85 percent?

Determine any opportunities identified during the audit to reduce overall waste generation by eliminating unnecessary purchases or non-recyclable packaging. Example: In order to reduce the amount of disposable packaging, centers can purchase products with recyclable packaging.

This, then, becomes the foundation for the next steps: Write a simple recycle policy with goals, and design and write up a plan for how those goals will be met.



(Photo Courtesy Penobscot JCA)



## Waste Stream Audit Report [TEMPLATE]

### A. Background

Provide basic information about building spaces and building waste streams. Include brief details on the different types of waste sources and current recycling practices and policies.

### B. Audit Procedure

Describe the procedure used to conduct the audit and rationale for determining that the collection interval used is representative of typical waste production.

Include details describing:

- Time frame of audit
- Procedures used to sort and measure materials types
- Any waste streams that were excluded from the audit and the reasons for excluding those materials. This does not need to include yard and landscape debris. Construction debris should be a separate report, if any.

See below for a suggested audit process.

### C. Summary

Review the key findings of the audit and identify changes and/or new programs that may be implemented to improve diversion rates.

**Example:** “This audit has revealed that \_\_\_\_\_lbs./yards of waste can be reduced to \_\_\_\_\_lbs./yards by:

- Changing the waste hauler to \_\_\_\_\_ Co., who can accept and recycle co-mingled glass, plastic, and metal waste;
- Upgrade recycle stations around the center and educate students and staff on using them instead of trash cans where appropriate.
- Construct a composting facility, and practice composting.
- Donate working appliances and equipment to charitable organizations.
- Purchase and use a “bulb eater” for fluorescent bulbs.
- Begin using compostable utensils.

The above measures should result in a \_\_\_\_\_ percent reduction of landfill waste leaving the center.”

### D. Waste Audit Results Summary (sample):

Waste Type	Amount (by weight or volume)		Percent of Waste Type Diverted	Percentage of Total Waste Associated with Waste Type	Diversion Program Currently in Place?
	Landfill Stream	Diversion Stream			
Glass, Metal, Plastics					

Mixed Paper					
Cardboard					
Fluorescent Lamps					
Batteries					
Wet Waste (Garbage)					
Restroom Waste					
Compostable Waste					
Non-recyclable Trash					
Durable Goods					
<b>Totals</b>					