

General Waste Tips and Audit Instructions

General Waste System Tips

- On campus, it is important that all bins stay next to each other so that people can properly sort
 - If the recycling is across the room or across the lunch area from the trash, you will get incorrect materials in both bins. Keeping all options together helps people to sort correctly
- For classrooms: generally, you'll be collecting garbage and paper recycling (blue) inside classrooms; if there are a lot of paper towels or food inside classrooms, you might want to add a compost
 - Students can play a role in emptying these bins if it isn't in the custodial contract, which can also serve to enhance a sense of ownership over proper sorting
- At lunch areas, it is recommended to have garbage, container recycling (brown), and compost (green) – most paper products at lunch are not clean enough to recycle in paper recycling, so a blue bin is usually not necessary
 - If possible, sorting supervision at lunch greatly enhances accuracy
 - This can be lunchtime staff, or Green Team students
- Add signage to ALL bins! This helps people remember how to sort
- Make sure your new collection systems are accompanied by education so people know how to use them
 - Green Teams are KEY to success – they can help make zero waste part of school culture

Service Audit Instructions

- The service audit will help to determine two things:
 - If the current services you have are adequate for the material being generated
 - How accurately materials are being sorted for curbside collection
- To conduct the audit, use the worksheet provided in this packet:
 - Schedule a week to monitor the bins and/or carts
 - Ensure you know what your collection days are for each stream (note that your recycling, compost, and trash are NOT necessarily picked up on the same day)
 - For each stream, plan to visit the afternoon before collection
 - E.g. if your compost is picked up on Tuesdays and Fridays, you would want to look at about 4pm on Monday and 4pm on Thursday to see the full bins
 - Coordinate with the custodians to get a sense of when they will empty materials into the carts
- Record your findings in the worksheet. See if your service level seems right, and if the materials making it into the carts and/or bins are correct

Sorting Accuracy Audit Instructions

- Gather a group of students (the Green Team or science class) to perform the audit
- Decide which locations you would like to audit



- Generally, you'll want to look at: a lunchtime station, classrooms, the staff lounge, and a playground or field station
- Decide how large of a sample of each type you'd like to view (e.g. if there are 30 classrooms, you might decide that 3 or 4 is an appropriate sample size)
- Lunchtime is a good time to audit – gather a tarp, bucket, hanging scale, and gloves and prepare to audit
- While lunch is still going on, you can audit classrooms or an outdoor area – wait until eating time is done, and then audit lunchtime cans
 - Spread the tarp and dump out the landfill material
 - Sort the materials by where they should be – create a paper recycling pile, a container recycling pile, a compost pile, and a trash pile
 - Estimate a visual volume of each stream after you have made your piles
 - Weigh each stream (recycling, compost, etc.) and record the weight of each
- Take a lot of pictures!!
- Record notes of what you are seeing:
 - Take note of common mistakes people are making, and common materials that could be avoided (e.g. if you see a lot of plastic utensils, which belong in trash, you could try and encourage students to bring their own silverware that can be washed and used again)
- Give compost and recycling a visual audit, take pictures, and determine how accurately people are sorting those streams