



## **Conduct a Hotel Waste Audit to Save Money**

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Reduce operating costs, attract guests back and demonstrate your hotel's environmental commitment



The amount of paper, garbage and other waste your hotel generates may be greater than you think. In addition to harming the environment, this waste is costing your hotel a lot of money. Therefore, in these times of cost cutting, hotel operators should consider conducting a waste audit to develop a plan to eliminate, reduce, reuse and recycle it all.

With waste and recycling programs being noticed by guests more than any other (unless you've got an energy monitoring kiosk in the lobby – which, by the way, exists), a successful program and on-going management could reduce operating costs.

### **Rundown of waste management benefits:**

- Increase hotel revenue
- Reduce trash disposal bills (*vary by region*)
- Internal marketing program through [recycling bins](#)
- Attract eco-conscious guests back
- Boost your “green” image to guests and corporate business
- Comply with state waste laws and regulations (*depends on state*)

For example, after the Hilton Hotel at Walt Disney World Village began its recycling program, its garbage collection fees dropped 80 percent – from \$6,000 a month to \$1,200 a month. You can also save money by reducing the amount of materials wasted, and you can make money from the sale of recyclables wastes. The amount saved will depend on your hotel size, waste amount, market value of materials recycled, the availability of local markets for the materials, your location, landfill tipping fees, the cost of recycling containers and charges for collecting the materials.

### **Some “feel good” results:**

- Save trees
- Reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases
- Saving dwindling landfill space, and
- Preserve non-renewable natural resources
- Conserve energy
- Save waste

### **WHAT IS A WASTE AUDIT?**

First steps to a waste management program is a waste audit. During a waste audit, the auditor investigates the sources, composition, weight, volume, and destinations of the waste that your hotel generates. By learning more about the trash your hotel generates, you can be better informed about the products you buy that contribute to waste and be better prepared to more efficiently dispose of it, saving money and improving your green hotel's environmental performance. One of my favorite sites has a good business waste audit form at [Earth 911](#).

## HOW TO START A WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING PROGRAM

Here are quick eight basic steps to start planning and implementing a waste reduction and recycling program at your [green hotel](#):

- Organize a waste reduction team
- Conduct a waste assessment
- Establish waste reduction goals
- Secure recycling markets
- Set up a collection and storage system
- Buy recycled product
- Train your staff and promote the program
- Establish monitoring and evaluation procedures

## HOW TO PERFORM A WASTE AUDIT

In order to create an accurate representation of your waste stream and recycling efforts, consider performing multiple waste audits at different seasons during the year. Here are a few things to note:

1. Ensure proper safety measures. Provide the guests to workers, and make sure everyone is sure to inform and educate the hotel's staff on health and safety matters.
2. Ensure proper confidentiality measures. Information that may contain personal and private should be kept confidential.
3. Enlist staff from each hotel department – your waste reduction team. The help of office and waste haulers is invaluable to a successful waste audit. These personnel can assist in gathering your hotel's waste and can also provide logistical insights about your recycling and waste management system.
4. Keep the timing of the audit a secret. By keeping the timing of a waste audit secret, you analyze is a truly representative sample of the waste your green hotel generates at a particular time of year. If people are informed in advance of the date of a waste audit, they may increase their recycling efforts or otherwise alter their behavior.
5. Collect waste. Work with waste haulers, staff, and concessions managers to collect the waste. Make sure that everything collected is clearly labeled by date and location.
6. Sort waste. Sort collected waste by type, noting paper; cardboard; recyclable and nonrecyclable plastics, glass, and metals; food waste; batteries; and so on. Make sure to note recyclable materials that have not been diverted for recycling.

Analyze results and make recommendations. What is the composition of your hotel's waste stream? How much can your hotel increase its recycling? By what methods can your [eco-friendly hotel](#) increase its recycling? How can waste be collected more efficiently? What are the opportunities to reduce waste generation? How can your sustainable business save money by altering its waste management systems?

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