



Allen County Solid Waste Management District
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How to Establish and Maintain your Waste Reduction Program

Getting Started:

The key elements essential to initiating a successful waste reduction program are:

- Management support and involvement
- An enthusiastic and knowledgeable Program Coordinator
- An active Waste Reduction Team
- Clear program goals
- Employee participation

Once these elements are in place, a business can begin to assess its potential for waste reduction.

Establish Management Commitment

The commitment and support of the business owner or operator are essential for developing a lasting and successful waste reduction program. Management's role is to:

- Designate a Program Coordinator.
- Endorse program goals and implementation.
- Establish and communicate the importance of reducing waste within the company.
- Encourage employee commitment and participation in the program.
- Guide and sustain the waste reduction effort.

Designate a Program Coordinator

The program needs a knowledgeable and motivated team leader capable of directing team efforts and administering the planning, implementation, and operation of the waste reduction program. A leader's commitment to the program in time and energy may be substantial, depending on the size of the business. Management may choose the waste disposal or operations manager as team leader, or perhaps an employee who has championed waste reduction. Another alternative is to ask for a volunteer. Regardless of who is the Program Coordinator, the task should be part of the person's job description.

Notify Personnel:

A good first step is for management to develop or endorse a brief announcement stating the company's wish to reduce its waste stream. The announcement should:

- Define waste reduction and its benefits to the company.
- Outline steps needed to carry out the program such as: 1) forming a Waste Reduction Team, 2) conducting a waste audit, and 3) implementing options.
- Ask for volunteers to participate in the program, solicit suggestions for ways to reduce waste, and stress that employee participation is important for the success of the program.
- Notify employees that more information will be provided as the program progresses.

Select a Waste Reduction Team:

Specific responsibilities of the team include:

- Setting program goals in conjunction with management.
- Educating management and employees on an ongoing basis about the program.
- Coordinating and performing an initial and any subsequent waste audits.
- Identifying, evaluating, and implementing options.
- Promoting the program to employees.
- Monitoring program success.

Set Preliminary Program Goals:

A variety of possible goals exist. Business may aim to reduce disposal costs, collect revenues from the sale of recyclables, enhance its corporate image, or demonstrate good faith efforts toward waste reduction and environmental improvement. These initial goals should be flexible, as they may need to be re-examined and adjusted as specific waste reduction options are considered.

Once the waste reduction team and management agree on preliminary program goals, the goals should be recorded and distributed to team members. At this point, the team should be ready to plan and perform a waste audit.

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Maintaining the Waste Reduction Program:

Set Goals:

Keep goals simple and clear, for example; to reduce the waste volume by 15 percent the following year. Building slowly also provides an opportunity to identify, assess, and solve any operational problems in the early stages.

Educate Employees:

As source reduction and recycling options are set up inform or educate employees about new changes, expected benefits, their roles, and responsibilities. It is essential that employees be informed how the program works and the importance of their cooperation and involvement.

Education programs need to reach all employees. The message can be conveyed in a variety of ways:

- Staff meetings and training sessions.
- Employee newsletters or emails.
- Visual reminders (posters, signs, flyers, power point presentations, etc.).
- Videos.
- Special activities (i.e. slogan contests, cash awards, or other recognition for waste reduction activities).
- New employee orientation.
- Job performance standards.

Large companies may need to conduct a full-scale education or training campaign. Small companies may need only to circulate emails or hold informal

meetings. Try to inform all employees about the program, because early program success acceptance relies on participation, as well as management.

New Equipment and Supplies:

For options that involve obtaining new equipment or supplies, some important factors are:

- Quality
- Durability
- Maintenance Needs
- Energy Efficiency
- Warranty Period



New equipment may need more or less space, requiring adjustments in current space allotments. Take that into consideration while looking at new office equipment.

Recycling Options:

Your analysis of recycling options provides some of the information needed to set up a recycling program. Generally, the implementation of company-wide recycling requires: 1) negotiating a sales contract, 2) developing and implementing the internal collection, 3) purchasing and installing needed equipment and supplies, 4) selecting and training collection staff, 5) selecting program monitors, and 6) educating employees.

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Monitor and Evaluate the Program:

The program should be evaluated intermittently to:

- Keep track of program success and to build on that success (i.e. waste reduced, recycling rates, and money saved).
- Identify new ideas for waste reduction.
- Identify areas needing improvement.
- Document good faith efforts and compliance with state.
- Determine effect of any new additions to the program.
- Keep employees informed and motivated.

The best way to assess and monitor program operations is through continued documentation of the program. Include an annual review of waste disposal receipts and purchasing records, or prepare a summary of recycling receipts.

As waste generation decreases, investigate the possibility of changing the terms of the waste hauling and disposal contract. Smaller waste disposal volumes should reduce your disposal fees.



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