

# How to Conduct a Food Waste Audit

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LOVE  
FOOD  
hate waste



ON AVERAGE 66% OF ALL FOOD WASTE PRODUCED IN HOSPITALITY IS PRE-CONSUMER WASTE. 34% OF FOOD WASTE IS LEFT BEHIND ON PLATES FROM CUSTOMERS.

Conducting a food waste audit will help you to find out how you can implement changes to avoid food waste, helping to save money and the environment. The results of a food waste audit will assist you to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and save on operating costs. It is ideal to conduct a food waste audit across a minimum 2 week period to help you to identify fluctuations between busy and slow periods. However, if you are able to keep records for 12 months you can identify seasonal patterns and trends.

## Steps to undertake a food waste audit<sup>1</sup>

1. Provide staff with 3 small extra bench bins and ask them to separate all food waste into these bins for the duration of their shift.
2. Label the bins with 'food waste only' stickers, and label each bin accordingly
  - Spoiled items
  - Preparation
  - Plate waste
3. This will allow you to easily identify where the majority of your waste is coming from.
4. Check for any food in the general rubbish bins, to make sure you are capturing all the food waste.



SPOILAGE



PREPARATION



PLATES

<sup>1</sup>Reference – NSW EPA (2015) Understanding your food waste. Online accessed 1st April 2015. <http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au/business/hospitality/understanding-your-food-waste.aspx>

## At the end of the shift, you will need to measure and record how much waste in each bin.

1. Remove any contaminants such as plastic or cardboard.
2. Estimate the volume of food waste in each bin, you can do this by either -
  - Using scales to measure the exact weight or
  - Firmly pressing the food waste down into each bin so that the contents are packed without air pockets and then estimating the volume
3. Record your findings and the date, it could be easy to use a diary or calendar to capture this information.
4. Empty the food waste into your compost bin or garbage bins.
5. At the end of each week, calculate the total quantity and type of food waste collected.
6. Use your findings to identify where savings could be made and where you can avoid food waste.

You can use this data as your benchmark. After you have implemented your new food waste avoidance practices, complete another audit and to measure any improvements.



If your business is ready to commit to reducing food waste, become a Love Food Hate Waste Business Partner by visiting the website

[www.lovefoodhate.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lovefoodhate.nsw.gov.au)

To access other resources and fact sheets on food waste avoidance for the hospitality industry visit

Hunter Councils Environment Division

[www.hccrems.com.au/waste](http://www.hccrems.com.au/waste)

[hccrems@huntercouncils.com.au](mailto:hccrems@huntercouncils.com.au)

This fact sheet has been produced as a series that includes;

1. How to conduct a food waste audit
2. How to avoid food waste - food preparation
3. How to avoid food waste - spoilage
4. How to avoid food waste - customer plates
5. How to manage excess or unavoidable food waste.

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