

Waste Prevention Guide for Businesses

Let us help you save up to 5% of your annual turnover!



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Legal disclaimer

The contents of this document is provided as an information guide only and does not constitute legal advice. This guide provides information about the law designed to help businesses safely manage their waste responsibly and while every care is taken to make sure our information is accurate, you should consider taking independent legal advice from a solicitor or other qualified adviser for professional assurance that your interpretation is appropriate to your particular situation. No responsibility is accepted by or on behalf of the North London Waste Authority for any errors, omissions or misleading statements within the guide. The North London Waste Authority does not accept liability for any actions which you or anyone else may take on the basis of the information contained in this document.



Why should businesses care about waste?

Every business generates waste. Whatever the type and volume of waste your company generates, it is costing you money. Businesses of all sizes can benefit by cutting waste and it doesn't cost the earth.

So what is the alternative?

Preventing waste is the best economic option for any business and it is also very easy!

Waste prevention is the idea of preventing the generation of waste in the first place, rather than waiting until there is a pile of waste to deal with. It is the best environmental option of all - much better than recycling and streets ahead of landfill.

Waste prevention

- Saves you money
- Saves the environment
- Gives you a market advantage

In addition to saving money in waste disposal costs, waste prevention can also save you money in purchasing costs. For example, if a restaurant buys more perishable products

than they can use, they not only have to pay to dispose of these materials, they have also wasted the money they spent on the purchase in the first place.

But our business recycles already...

Recycling can be the beginning of the changes your business can make to save money and be environmentally responsible. While sending waste for recycling is a better and often cheaper option than sending waste to landfill, it still costs businesses money.

Did you know...

"For every tonne of household waste produced, commercial, industrial and construction businesses produce another six tonnes."

Why should you do something about it?



Because it is costing you money

By taking simple actions to reduce waste disposal costs and raw material usage, businesses can save 4 to 5% of their annual turnover- money which goes straight onto the bottom line.

Waste disposal is expensive and the cost is set to rise

The majority of waste disposed in North London is sent to landfill, with the remainder sent for recycling or incineration. Because waste decaying in a landfill site, creates methane and a liquid called leachate which can damage the environment if not managed properly, the Government introduced a tax on every tonne of waste sent to landfill. This tax will continue to rise until 2011 by which time the tax alone will be £48 per tonne - around 8 times the cost to landfill a tonne of waste in 1996.

What are the indirect costs?

The impact of waste disposal on a business isn't just the bill you receive each month to empty the bin. There are lots of other impacts of waste you may not realise, including:

- **Lost raw materials**
- **Handling and storage costs**
- **Energy and utility costs**
- **Time**
- **Effort**
- **Transportation**
- **Maintenance**
- **Staff and customer comfort**

These costs, when added to the obvious costs of the waste management bill can make managing your waste very expensive, and poor waste management even more so.

It is a legal requirement

All businesses create waste and all businesses have a legal duty to dispose of their waste responsibly, which means that your business should:

1 Put waste in a container

You must put waste in a suitable container so that it cannot fall out, blow away, or be taken by thieves or animals. (Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 34(1)). You could be prosecuted and fined for flytipping. (Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 33).

2 Transfer waste only to an authorised person

You have what the law calls the 'duty of care' regarding your business waste – this means you are part of a chain of responsibility for what happens to it after it leaves your premises. Business waste must be removed only by the local council or a licensed waste collection company. If you do not comply with this, you could be fined. (Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 34 (1c)).

3 Complete a transfer note when your waste is removed

A transfer note must be filled in and signed by both a representative of your business, and by the waste contractor who collects your waste, stating the quantity and type of materials being removed. (Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 34 (1c)).

4 Prevent or clear up street litter caused by your business

You must take steps to stop litter relating to your business ending up on the streets nearby. For example you could pay for and empty a litter bin outside your business, or sweep up litter from your business left on the pavement outside. (Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 93 (1)).



If you don't comply with the legislation you could be held responsible and face stiff penalties. Check with the Environment Agency on 08708 506 506 (Mon- Fri 8am-6pm) to find out more.

It gives you a competitive advantage

As awareness of environmental issues grows, more and more consumers are choosing to "buy green". While it is easy for a big company to advertise their green credentials, how does a small shop or restaurant in North London let people know they are making green choices?

Well, some North London councils are running programmes where businesses can commit to simple actions to improve the environment in exchange for receiving recognition in the form of a certificate and/or a shop-window sticker. These can be displayed to inform customers about the good work the business is doing. Both your customers and staff will appreciate what you are doing.

How do you get started?

If you are just getting started keep these suggestions in mind:

- Start off small - target one or two materials for reduction
- Focus first on ideas that require minimal capital investment
- Involve all employees in planning and implementation

Waste fact: A London wide switch to double-sided printing could save 17.5 billion sheets of A4 paper every year – enough paper to wrap around the earth four times.



Our top tips for managing your waste:

In the office:

Reduce

- 1 Print double sided (saves up to 50% of paper costs)
- 2 Sign up to have your business name removed from junk mail lists - you have to pay to dispose of that junk mail!
- 3 Change settings so your fax machine and printers don't print unwanted header or report sheets
- 4 Print only when necessary - send emails rather than printing letters or memos to save paper
- 5 Purchase durable equipment
- 6 Use energy efficient light bulbs - they last much longer and save money while in use
- 7 Switch equipment off completely in the evening and at weekends

Reuse

- 1 Reuse envelopes - either for internal circulation or buy sticky labels to cover old addresses and reuse envelopes externally
- 2 Use rechargeable batteries
- 3 Use refillable printer cartridges
- 4 Reuse single-sided paper for printing out draft documents or internal reports
- 5 Reuse incoming packaging and boxes for outgoing deliveries
- 6 Convert scrap paper into post-it notes and notepads
- 7 Provide staff with reusable glasses and mugs rather than disposable cups
- 8 Repair furniture where possible or donate it to charity
- 9 Shred low-quality paper or cardboard and use as protective packaging

Be a Champion!

Have you thought of being or appointing a Waste Prevention Champion to coordinate your waste prevention activities? The Champion can implement reduce and reuse practices and also raise awareness and motivate other members of staff.

In the restaurant and take-away:



Waste fact: the UK produces 500,000 tonnes of food waste per year; it is worth £400 million and disposal costs another £50 million.



Reduce

- 1 Request reusable, recyclable or recycled packaging from your supplier
- 2 Sign up to have your business name removed from unwanted mail lists - you have to pay to dispose of that unwanted mail!
- 3 Do not over-package take away items
- 4 Bulk buy produce to reduce unnecessary packaging
- 5 Ask before supplying carrier bags and disposable cutlery – if you use less it costs you less
- 6 Encourage customers to reuse containers
- 7 If using disposables, only give each customer one disposable napkin – not a handful.

Reuse

- 1 Serve sauces and vinegar in refillable containers
- 2 Use washable fabric table cloths, rather than paper
- 3 Use washable fabric napkins, rather than disposable ones
- 4 Refill glass bottles or jugs for water instead of selling bottled water- saves you waste disposal costs and keeps the customer happy
- 5 Use concentrated cleaning agents in refillable containers.

Spread the news!

Have you thought of informing customers and suppliers of your commitment to preventing waste? Customers and suppliers have a growing interest in environmental issues and the implementation of waste prevention practices will enhance your reputation.



In the shop

Reduce

- 1 Ask your supplier to take-back bulk-packaging for reuse
- 2 Sign up to have your business name removed from unwanted mail lists - you have to pay to dispose of that unwanted mail!
- 3 Ask before supplying carrier bags, if you use less it costs you less
- 4 Stock loose fruit and vegetables - help your customers reduce their packaging waste
- 5 Provide reusable glasses and mugs for staff rather than disposable cups

Teach your customers!

Have you thought about informing your customers about the importance of waste prevention at the checkout? You can not only ask them if they need a plastic bag but also encourage them to return unwanted reusable items such as metal hangers to dry cleaners.

Waste fact: Every year in the UK an estimated 17.5 billion plastic bags are given away by supermarkets. This represents over 130,000 tonnes of plastic - enough to cover an area the size of London twice over with a layer of bags.

Reuse

- 1 Encourage customers to bring their carrier bags in for reuse
- 2 Reuse incoming packaging and boxes for outgoing deliveries
- 3 Shred low-quality paper or cardboard and use as protective packaging
- 4 Use concentrated cleaning agents in refillable containers.

Get free support

Envirowise

Envirowise offers UK businesses free, confidential and independent advice on issues ranging from waste prevention through to energy use.

This free support includes:

- Up to 2 hours of free expert advice over the telephone; call 0800 585794 or email helpline@envirowise.gov.uk
- Publications and information on waste prevention issues, methods and successes
- A range of spreadsheet, training and monitoring tools to help businesses plan and track their waste prevention savings

To find out more visit www.envirowise.gov.uk

BREW

Business Resource Efficiency and Waste programme. Your business can receive advice and support on improving resource efficiency measures, minimising waste production and improving its bottom line through a number of projects funded by the BREW Programme.

To find out more visit www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/brew/

Centre for Environment and Safety Management for Business (CESMB)

CESMB is a centre of environmental management expertise based within Middlesex University. Established in 1993, its mission is to help businesses and other organisations recognise how environmental management is a key factor in business competitiveness locally, nationally and internationally.

To find out more visit www.mdx.ac.uk/www/cesmb/

London Sustainability Exchange

London Sustainability Exchange (LSx) is a charity which aims to accelerate the transition to a sustainable London by connecting and motivating people. They provide advice to businesses that want to improve their environmental and social performance. Businesses can sign up to London Better Together, a free, web based Charter designed to encourage London businesses of all sizes to take action. If your business is in the food and drink sector you can visit the Greener Food menu of resources for cafes, restaurants and hotels.

To find out more visit www.lsx.org.uk



Donate your unwanted goods

Business waste can be made up of many items including empty bottles, wood crates and pallets, old computer and electrical items still in working order etc. While businesses must pay to dispose of these items, there might be someone just around the corner who needs them!

NISP

The National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) helps match companies so they can trade waste materials, share assets, logistics and expertise. For more information, contact:

NISP - London

Buchanan House, 24-30 Holborn, London, EC1N 2HS

T: 0207 314 4616

E: london@nisp.org.uk

Freecycle

Freecycle is a free, volunteer online exchange where people can swap unwanted goods, which may still be useful to others. There is a Freecycle group operating in every North London borough.

For links to all North London Freecycle groups, visit: www.nlwa.gov.uk/html/links.asp

Green-Works

Green-Works is a social enterprise and environmental charity which provides a commercial scale, environmentally responsible disposal route for redundant office furniture. Green-Works has the capacity to handle office moves involving 25 – 2500 workplaces, through a series of strategically placed reception facilities.

For further details and information about how to donate your used office furniture, visit www.green-works.co.uk or call Eileen Browne on 0845 230 2231

Computer Aid International

Computer Aid International is a registered charity which provides refurbished computers for reuse in education, health and not-for-profit organisations in developing countries. Donating your computers to Computer Aid guarantees compliance with all UK legislation, including the WEEE directive, Data Protection Act and Environment Act.

For more information on how to donate computers visit www.computeraid.org/

T: 0208 361 5540

E: info@computeraid.org

Giving World Online

Giving World Online is a not for profit organisation dedicated to linking businesses with unwanted surplus to charities and the people they help. Their aim is to divert the world's surplus resources to meet the needs of the world's poorest people.

A business with surplus goods advertises it on Giving World Online. Charities register, 'search for surplus,' select what they need and arrange collection. The service is free and goods received are not for resale or for use in fundraising activities.

If you wish to make a donation visit www.givingworldonline.com

T: 0845 833 3783

London Community Recycling Network

For details of other community projects offering reuse services in your area contact London Community Recycling Network on 0207 324 4690 email: info@lcrn.org.uk, or go to their website at www.lcrn.org.uk

Get help from your local council

For more information, please contact the Waste and Recycling team in your local council:

London Borough of Barnet

Waste and Sustainability Team

North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP

T: 020 8359 7400

E: recycling@barnet.gov.uk

F: 0870 889 6811

London Borough of Camden

Street Environment Services

Town Hall, Argyle Road, London WC1H 8EQ

T: 020 7974 6914

E: street.environment@camden.gov.uk

F: 020 7974 3153

London Borough of Enfield

Environmental Protection & Regulation

PO Box 57, Civic Centre, Silver Street, London EN1 3XH

T: 020 8379 1000

E: waste.services@enfield.gov.uk

F: 0208 379 5120

London Borough of Hackney

Commercial Waste

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration Directorate

Millfields Road Depot, Millfields Road, London E5 0AR

T: 020 8533 7583

E: commercialwaste@hackney.gov.uk

F: 020 8986 7137

London Borough of Haringey

Environmental Resources

255 High Road, River Park House, London N22 8HQ

T: 020 8489 3528

E: recycling@haringey.gov.uk

F: 020 8489 4500

London Borough of Islington

222 Upper Street, London, N1 1XR

T: 020 7527 7556

E: business.waste@islington.gov.uk

F: 020 7527 4577

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Public Realm, Environment and Regeneration, Low Hall, Argyll Avenue, London E10 7AS

T: 020 8496 3000

E: wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk

F: 020 8496 3001

Close the loop

Choosing to buy reused, refurbished or recycled products is an important step in creating a sustainable workplace and helps to stimulate markets for the materials we recycle. If a recycled option is not available you may find there are more sustainable options than that which you currently use. Closed loop recycling is a concept that simply involves buying recycled products as well as recycling, thereby significantly reducing raw material usage. The success of recycling depends on strong markets for recycled goods.

Please look at the links to some recycled databases.

Buy Recycled: If you would like more information about buying recycled-content products go to this central government sponsored recycled content product database.

www.wastebook.org/recprod.htm

The sustainable product directory provides a comprehensive database of sustainable products and suppliers with information on nearly 300 products.

Visit the link below to view the international catalogue of recycled products, sustainable products or sustainable suppliers.

www.recycledproduct.info

How do you know it's working?

To determine whether your waste prevention efforts are successful, from both an environmental and economic standpoint, you need to evaluate your progress.

Suggestions for evaluating your waste prevention efforts include:

- **Monitor progress and changes in the amount of waste your business produces**

Envirowise provides an online tool which can help kick start your environmental assessment. To download the indicator tool visit:

www.envirowise.gov.uk/uk/Our-Services/Tools/Envirowise-Indicator.249257.html

- **Calculate the savings**

Look at savings in handling, treating, and disposal costs as well as savings from reduced raw material. The Envirowise Savings Calculator (www.envirowise.gov.uk/savingscalculator) takes businesses through three simple steps to help them minimise costs and maximise profits. By inputting a few basic details into the calculator they can reveal the savings they could make.

- **Look at the indirect benefits**

Try to gauge the value of less obvious benefits such as improved public image, reaching new markets, improving or expanding production processes, employee morale and safety, and other advantages.

- **Re-evaluate your efforts on a regular basis**

As new raw materials and processes are introduced, waste streams change. Conduct regular assessments of your business to identify additional waste prevention opportunities. Remember, as long as you continue to generate waste, there are opportunities to reduce it.





Preventing waste pays off!

Alara Wholefoods, a muesli manufacturing business located in the heart of Kings Cross, Camden adopted their Zero Waste policy in 2008. The policy helping the business move towards wasting nothing they use by avoiding producing it in the first place or through increased recycling.

The business has 50 staff, produces over 70 tonnes of muesli a week and at any time can produce over 240 different types of muesli. They export to approximately 15 countries worldwide and produce 75% of the UK's fair-trade and 60% of the organic muesli, in fact they produced the first approved organic muesli in the country.

How they achieved zero waste

Obviously there's potentially a lot of waste to deal with both from their staff and operations. So how did they do it?

- **Packaging paper and plastic are all recycled**
- **Food waste is collected by a commercial recycling company**
- **Office papers composted on site in their community garden**
- **Empty boxes are reused**

- **Batteries, electrical equipment and metal taken to Islington recycling centre**
- **Printer cartridges are refilled by Cartridge World**



Why they adopted this policy

Not only does it make sense for the environment it also makes good business sense too! There were clear reasons for doing this:

Helping the Environment

Zero Waste helps the environment – the more we recycle the less waste goes to land fill sites.

Staff involvement

As a result of Alara's green initiative, the team now have a clear goal of their own and have become more productive, less wasteful and, ultimately, closer. As well as increased output the zero waste policies have built Alara into a healthier, happier workplace.

Commercial Benefit

Today's consumer is much more savvy and 'enviro-conscious' than 5 years ago. Whether your products are zero waste, fair trade or organic they will have an improved image with your end user and improve the way in which your business is perceived.

'Zero waste is practical for me and means nothing goes to landfill and nothing to incinerate from the entire company'

Local Community involvement

For Alara the zero waste policy has allowed us to interact with the local community in several ways. As part of the project we have created a garden on wasteland behind the factory, this helps us dispose of food waste as compost and grow food for the canteen.

Saving money

A key money saver has been food waste. We now have special red bins for all food waste in the factory where previously spillages just went into the wheelie bin with other waste. Now it is segregated and seen everyone is much more careful about spillages etc and waste food has reduced from 250Kg to approx 100Kg a week, saving about £7,500 PA.

Another has been council collections. We were spending £20 per day and we now spend nothing!

Alex Smith
MD Alara Wholefoods

