

Solid Waste Management in Offices



Table of Contents

Introduction

Phase 1: Preparation / Infrastructure

Phase 2: Awareness / Initiation

Phase 3: Sustenance / Follow-up

Waste Audit

Summary

Preparation / Infrastructure

Awareness sessions/ Green Teams

Implementation / Follow up

Introduction

Cities being the hubs of job opportunities, there will always be a natural influx of people towards them, the world over. This spiralling population growth places a huge strain on the infrastructure and basic services such as water, traffic etc. Now the disposal of the enormous amounts of garbage generated has also become an equally big challenge. If we are to deal with this challenge effectively, it is crucial that every waste generating entity whether it be house, school, mall or office has to become wastewise.

Offices being the place where the adult workforce in a metro spends most of its working hours, it can't be stressed enough how critical it is to adopt effective waste management practices. Typically, the practice followed by offices is to have multiple waste bins lined with plastic covers for disposal of waste by employees. Again, the average office would have too many single use items being disposed on a daily basis. And the sad fact is that almost all the waste generated at offices and in big metros in general is being dumped in landfills as Reject waste - an absolutely abominable practice, considering our landfills are nothing but villages and towns in the outskirts where our trash results in lethally polluting the air, water and land. Worse, there might be people manually sorting and segregating our mixed garbage, resulting in irreversible damage to their health.

If each of us takes responsibility for the waste we generate everyday, segregate it at source in the right bin and ensure that it reaches the right destination, about 90% of our waste can be saved from the landfill and recycled effectively. With this, we could transform the way our city looks by removing the source of litter and also preserve the environment for our next generation. This document takes you on a quick tour of how to make your office waste-efficient. Please do not stop with doing this at the office. Help us take the message forward by initiating good waste management practices in your neighbourhood. Your city needs your support to save it from being choked by garbage. Join us and make a difference!

A special thanks to Green Commandos/Hasirudala team for their valuable inputs on this document.



Phase 1: Preparation / Infrastructure

The first step in starting segregation at source in office is getting the commitment from the Senior Management of the organization. Without this, it will get reduced to a half baked initiative. With right commitment from Management, an office can be converted into a zero waste office.

The first phase of the entire drive is to set up the related infrastructure to support the waste segregation initiative at the office. The infrastructure involves the following steps:

1. Following a standard Color coding for each category of waste is essential.
2. Setting the number and placement of common bins in the office premises is the most important step of the entire procedure, as this makes or breaks the infrastructure within the office. **Typically, if the office has cubicles, individual bins in cubicles should be avoided as they attract mixed waste.** Having small cubicle bins not only increase the overhead on the support staff to maintain the bins with plastic liners etc., but also reduces the ability to think before throwing.
3. Bins should be placed in office as follows:

| Type of Waste | Colour Code | Items | Placement of Bins |
|---------------|-------------|---|---|
| Organic | Green Bin | Fruit peels, Food waste, tea, coffee bags etc | <input type="checkbox"/> Canteen/cafeteria <input type="checkbox"/> In each floor Pantry/ coffee machines |
| Recyclable | Blue Bin | Plastic,Paper, metal, Glass etc | <input type="checkbox"/> Place next to every Green bin in canteen/Cafeteria/pantry etc <input type="checkbox"/> Place next to Printers |
| Reject | Red Bin | Broken glass, Sanitary, Swept dust | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathrooms, inside cafeteria, collection point |
| E Waste | Yellow Bin | CDs, cables, batteries etc.. | <input type="checkbox"/> one in every floor near reception area |

4. Elimination of disposable cutlery. The biggest cause of mixed waste in offices is due to disposable cutlery. All employees should be either given or asked to bring their own mug for tea/ coffee and a bottle for water. Pantry / Canteens/ Cafeteria should be stocked with only reusable cutlery.
5. Decide a storage area in the premises to hold the dry recyclable waste for at least a fortnight before the service providers can come for the collection. Please note that this storage unit should be clean and hygienic, preferably at some distance from the wet waste bins, and also in locked premises.

Phase 2: Awareness / Initiation

1. Once the above preparations have been made, the next step is to have an awareness presentation for the employees of the office to make them appreciate the reason for the exercise, and get commitments from them to participate/join the volunteer group driving the initiative. Bins should have been procured by this time, the service provider finalized, and training given to the support staff.
2. Before the initiation, a fun session such as a clean-up drive at some area close to the office premises may also be planned to invigorate employees. There should be a positive buzz going around the office about the new initiative at the time of launch for maximum participation, and a sense of pride fostered among all employees.
3. An email should also go out to all employees indicating the process clearly and mentioning the office's new waste management policies, which mandate **segregation of waste**. This can be sent along with some consolidated awareness material or quizzes for people to understand the context of segregation.

Phase 3: Sustenance / Follow-up

1. Once the segregation starts, it would be ideal to have some sort of on-going competitions between volunteer teams to keep the momentum for segregation going, maybe by giving small prizes to the most wastewise volunteer group.
2. Housekeeping incharge will update waste audit survey once a week and sends reports to volunteer team. Based on the report, they will suggest which block is waste wise.
3. The waste management policy of the office should become a permanent addition to the orientation module of new joiners. A starter kit may also be prepared for them, including a ceramic cup or water bottle so as to completely eliminate paper/plastic cups from the office.



Waste Audit

Name of the establishment :

| Type of waste | List of Items | Quantity in KGs/ Nos per day | waste generated location (ex.Canteen) |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Organic | | | |
| Recyclable | | | |
| Reject | | | |
| Electronic | | | |
| Disposables | Paper cups Plastic glasses Styrofoam bowls paper plates plastic cutlery Trash bags | | |

* This can help you come up with a plan to reduce reject waste.

Summary

Preparation / Infrastructure

- From the beginning, involvement of senior management is very crucial in taking decisions on setting up infrastructure and communicating waste management policies to employees.
- Perform a waste audit to assess type of waste and quantum of waste.
- Procure required number of standard colour coded bins.
- Decide on an organic waste processing method that can manage your organic waste.
- Determine the garbage service provider that can take care of recyclables, reject and E-waste.
- Ban all disposable items from campus. Only provide reusable items every where. “Not creating waste” is the mantra for successful waste management.

Awareness sessions/ Green Teams

- Have an awareness session for all employees.
- Share current waste audit details and how this initiative is going to help handle waste.
- Volunteer sign up from every group is very crucial. Form a “Green Committee”.
- A fun cleanup drive can be arranged to create momentum.
- Communicate all new waste management guidelines to be followed by employees.
- Training for the housekeeping supervisor and staff is very important.

Implementation / Follow up

- Set up all the required bins in respective places with clear segregation guidelines posters.
- Housekeeping supervisor has to monitor regularly the process for each block and audit the process.
- Based on these audits, best block can be decided and rewarded.
- Similarly defaulting blocks need to attend an awareness session and improve the process.
- Monthly waste audit details should be shared with “Green Committee” to assess and improve the process.
- New employees, as part of his/her orientation, should also get waste management guidelines and a complimentary starter kit.

