



Food Waste Snapshot Audit Protocol



This document describes the step-by-step process to set up and conduct a food waste snapshot audit. Please see audit preparation document(s) for preparation and site screening suggestions.

1. Line the staging area with black plastic.
 - This will reduce cleanup time and litter removal after the audit is complete.
2. Empty bin(s) or dumpster and conduct a total bag count.
 - If auditing more than one site, make sure to keep bags separate and conduct audit for one facility at a time.
 - Pile the bags at the top or bottom of the staging area. If the site has a large amount of waste or the audit is staffed with many volunteers, organizers may consider a two tier setup (see Figure 1 below).
3. Label bins with sharpie and duct tape for each category for easy label removal.
 - Keep at least two bins per station unlabeled, this will be for transporting and weighing waste.
4. Assign volunteers into sorting stations.
 - Designate one volunteer as the recorder. This role will consist of photo documentation, recording of weights and observations, and general oversight. This role may be best filled by an organizer of the audit event.
 - The recorder or another designated volunteer should be available to consult on classification of materials until all volunteers are consistently clear on categories.
5. Tare sorting bin.
 - As long as the same type of bins are being used throughout the sorting process, taring only one bin is necessary since the weight difference will be negligible.
6. Sort each bag into one of the five sorting categories:
 - Edible food (partially eaten cracker packs, apples with bites out of them, etc)
 - Donatable food (whole products not open or bitten)
 - Inedible food (Banana peels, egg shells, bones, non edible food stuffs)
 - Compostable materials (non-food items such as food-soiled paper, packaging, paper towels)
 - Recycling (glass, plastic, metal, and paper)
 - Trash bins should line either side for waste that cannot be sorted into one of these five categories.
 - Recyclables should be further sorted into four additional bins in another area-glass, plastics, metals, and paper. If detailed recycling data is not needed, skip this step. Customize which items are recyclable according to what is available under normal operating circumstances at the facilities you're auditing..
7. When any of the bins get full, weigh and re-bag.
 - The recording sheet has space to record multiple weights to then tally at the end of the audit to reduce mathematical errors.

8. After completing the audit for site one, conduct a brief team meeting before moving onto the next site.
 - What were some of the challenges? What could we do to make the process better or more efficient? What worked and what didn't? How will we change this protocol ahead of the next audit? What trends did we observe in the waste?
9. After the audit of all sites is complete, conduct a cleanup of the staging area.
 - Ensure all bins are rinsed and there is no chunky residue on pavement or windblown trash in the area. All bags should be secured and back in the dumpster or bin(s) before leaving.
 - The audit process will produce some waste as we have decided to line the staging area with black plastic, plastic can be rinsed and saved for future audits.

Figure 1. Example Audit Staging Setup for Multiple Volunteers.

