



Solid Waste Management

What's all the fuss about waste?

Western Australian's send about 2.9 million tonnes of material to landfill each year, much of which is potentially recyclable. Generally products with little contamination can be recycled or reused easier and more economically than those that are all mixed together, hence separating wastes at source is an important issue.

Waste Audits

A waste audit will help to identify the products in the current waste stream that could be directed away from landfill either towards some sort of recycling or reuse, or avoided completely.

Some of the issues you would address whilst undertaking a waste audit include:

- The types of waste produced. This could include paper / cardboard, metals (including aluminium or tin cans and larger pieces of scrap metal) , glass, plastics and organic wastes.
- The quantity of waste produced on a weekly / yearly basis broken into waste types.
- The current cost of waste disposal

Once you have identified the products and quantities of potential recyclables you can begin to investigate who is available to remove those products and how much it will cost.

Segregating waste products

The contamination of any product reduces its usefulness or value. Segregating wastes into separate classes of recyclable products will ensure it is not contaminated with another waste product.

Sometimes the easiest way to avoid contamination is to segregate waste at the point at which it is first produced or collected eg: a 'paper only' bin next to a desk or separate bins for plastic bottles, aluminium cans and general litter in a public place. This could however require some training or information to be given to those producing the waste to ensure they use the collection point correctly.

Another option would be to collect all waste together then separate it out later. Depending on the circumstances however, this method can be more time consuming and expensive. Some local councils in Perth have the facilities in place to manage wastes in this way, however contamination can still be an issue, hence making it more difficult to get a high quality recyclable product.

Segregating hazardous wastes such as batteries and chemicals can ensure that there is no contamination of wastes or health impacts.

Types of solid wastes that could be segregated

The types of wastes that could be segregated for recycling include:

- Plastics including bottles and food containers through to commercial quantities of cling wrap.
- Glass
- Metals including aluminium & tin cans and scrap metal components.
- Paper and cardboard including boxes, office paper, juice / milk containers.
- Printer cartridges
- Computer equipment
- Food and garden wastes

Other items that should be separated include those that could be hazardous either to human and environmental health such as chemicals, asbestos and batteries.

Managing client's waste

Cleaning contractors generally handle their client's solid waste, however it is the client's responsibility to separate their wastes and provide recycling facilities. If these systems are not already in place, cleaners have an opportunity to encourage clients to implement sustainable waste management practices such as recycling.

Cleaners may also be in a position to encourage their clients to use products that are made from recycled material, such as toilet paper and paper towels.

For further information about the Green Stamp program and how to incorporate environmental best management practices in your cleaning business, please contact;

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