

# Waste

Waste can cost a company up to 4% of its turnover. A large proportion of that waste is avoidable. Improving your environmental performance, by reducing waste and tackling resource inefficiencies, could save you around £1,000 per employee every year.

## Measuring substrate waste

Conduct a 'waste audit', logging different 'waste streams' according to the type of substrate involved – film, paper, cardboard etc. Check the amount of each substrate you order from your suppliers against the amount of product of that type going out of your doors. The difference will tell you how much you are wasting. Understanding each stage of your production process will show you where.

## Monitoring waste recycling

To find out how much waste you recycled in the last 12 months you need a reliable reporting process. This depends on knowing exactly how much waste you are producing in each of your different 'waste streams'. Your local council will tell you which types of waste can be recycled and which streams need to be disposed off. Keep a record of how much product in each stream you ordered in and how much went out as product for the client. Accurate stock-taking is therefore vital.

## Costing hazardous waste disposal

Hazardous waste in the printing industry includes photochemical solutions and films, machinery lubricating oils, ink-contaminated solvents and rags used for cleaning. The costs of disposing of it are rising all the time, so less waste is not only good for the environment – it also saves money. New regulations mean you will need to keep records of all hazardous waste movements, supplying specified information to the Environment Agency or the emergency services. Your waste contractor should also send you a return each quarter, telling you what has happened to your waste. This data will help you keep an eye on costs. For more information:

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/)

## Calculating how much you are spending on waste

In 2008, the landfill tax for waste increased to £32 per tonne and is set to rise by £8 each year. The average 'gate-fee' for a tonne of mixed waste is over £50. So it is vital you know how much you are spending on waste and where to make savings. The real cost of the waste is not just disposal costs, however, it's what you paid for the raw materials and the hard work involved in making the waste. The real cost of waste is about 10 times the cost of disposal [Source: Envirowise].

## Documenting waste procedures

Identify each of your waste procedures according to the different types of waste or 'waste stream'. This can be done using flow-charts, with inputs and outputs listed at each stage of your printing or production process. The correct procedure for each waste output can then be listed. Make sure this information is shared throughout your company so all your employees know exactly what waste goes where.

## Putting together a waste reduction Action Plan

Start by simply brainstorming what you and your colleagues think you need to achieve and why. Then work out how to turn these ideas into positive actions. In each area, work out how you are going to make the improvements, who will be responsible for them and what the deadline will be. For some ideas read *200 Tips For Reducing Waste*: [www.envirowise.gov.uk/EN030](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/EN030)

### Key words

**Waste stream** – the process for dealing with a particular type of waste, e.g. plastic containers.

**Substrate** – the material on which text or images are printed, e.g. paper, cardboard etc.

**Land-fill tax** – a tax paid by businesses and local authorities disposing of waste on landfill sites, paid in addition to 'gate fees'.

**Gate fee** – the charge for disposing of waste in landfill sites.

**Flow chart** – a diagram, usually using boxes or 'bubbles', illustrating the stages in a process.

# Funds for Print

For more information contact Funds for Print at [info@fundsforsprint.org.uk](mailto:info@fundsforsprint.org.uk) or try the Environment and Energy Helpline on **0800 585794**.