10 Steps to Being WasteWise

Welcome to WasteWise!

Now that you have registered to be a partner, you might be wondering how to get started. WasteWise created this 10-step process to help you navigate your involvement in WasteWise, establish waste reduction efforts, and start seeing cost-savings and results. Upon joining WasteWise, your organization will implement sustainable materials management (SMM); a systematic approach that seeks to reduce materials used and their associated environmental impacts over the entire life cycle.

❶ Form a Team

- Creating a team of employees who are responsible for planning, designing, and implementing waste reduction activities is an important step for successful waste reduction.

- The number of employees on your team will depend on the size of your organization and its individual departments and operations. A team spanning a broad range of departments will offer a greater variety of perspectives and creative problem-solving techniques for waste reduction solutions.

- Through the SMM data management system, you can also add multiple reporting contacts and control which users have access to each reporting location. This allows multiple people to be responsible for data collection and entry, if desired. New reporting contacts can register online, or you can add reporting contacts through the "Users" section of the SMM data management system.

- More information about forming a successful waste reduction team can be found within the Plan Your WasteWise Participation page.

❷ Explore the SMM Data Management System

- Once you've joined WasteWise, we recommend becoming familiar with the SMM data management system. This online reporting tool gives you the ability to track your organization's waste generation and reduction activities. Both baseline and annual data are divided into five sections:

  ➡ **Municipal Solid Waste Disposed** includes waste sent to a landfill or incinerator, including waste-to-energy.

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➥ **Waste Prevention**, or source reduction, includes selling materials for reuse, donating materials for reuse, double-sided copying, etc. **Recycling** turns materials that would otherwise become waste into valuable resources (e.g. off-site composting and office paper recycling).

➥ **Buy/Manufacture Recycled Products** includes any products you've purchased or manufactured with recycled content.

➥ **Cost Savings/Revenue** is a section where you can input totals for waste prevention and recycling revenue or money you've saved due to your waste reduction efforts.

➥ **Comments** section includes any additional information you would like to share about your activities (e.g. external promotion of WasteWise, employee education, etc.).

- About the SMM Data Management System provides additional information on this reporting tool.

❸ Work with WasteWise

- One of the most valuable resources you receive as a WasteWise participant is access to free one-on-one technical assistance. The WasteWise Helpline will help you establish your baseline data, set waste diversion goals, share insights and success stories from other partners, answer questions, and provide you with useful information and resources as you work towards waste reduction success.

- Contact the WasteWise Helpline at wastewisehelp@epa.gov or (800) EPA-WISE (372-9473) with any questions.

- Connect with your WasteWise EPA regional representative for further assistance and recommendations.

❹ Launch & Implement WasteWise

- Educating your employees is the best way to facilitate understanding of your waste reduction efforts and to encourage their full participation. Successful educational campaigns include posting information on your intranet site, e-mail reminders, signs and posters, bulletin boards, contests, and newsletter articles. A more social, interactive educational event could be to host brown bag lunch about waste reduction.

- The Partner Support section on the WasteWise website provides free tools and resources to implement and promote your waste reduction efforts.

- Additional resources are available on the website to help you communicate the impact of waste prevention and recycling.

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❺ Collect Baseline Data

- New WasteWise partners have 90 days to submit baseline data after they register.

- Baseline data are a great way to measure your progress over time compared to when you started participating in WasteWise.

- Performing a waste assessment can be a helpful mechanism to establish a baseline.

- The Volume-to-Weight Conversion Factor document provides standard conversions for various materials.

- Baseline data represent the amount of municipal solid wastes being generated, disposed, prevented and recycled over the period of one year. If you do not have a year's worth of data, please estimate or extrapolate out your existing data to extend to a 12-month period.

❻ Report Baseline Data & Set Goals

- Partners report baseline data in the SMM data management system.

- Along with submitting baseline data, partners are required to set at least a 5% incremental waste diversion goal for the first year of participation. In subsequent years, participants will be required to set self-directed quantitative goals for waste diverted (i.e., set at any level). For goal-setting, waste diverted is the cumulative tonnage of waste prevention and recycling figures.

- For example:

  ➡ **Total Tons of Waste Prevention and Recycling for Baseline:** 50 tons

  ➡ **Goal:** Increase waste diversion by 5% (2.5 tons)

  ➡ **Meeting Your Goal:** At least 52.5 tons of waste diverted for upcoming year

❼ Track & Measure Progress

- Establishing a regular tracking system is an essential component to compiling your waste reduction information. A tracking system will not only help you submit annual data through the SMM data management system each year, but it will also help identify how your efforts benefit both the environment and your organization's bottom line.

- The SMM data management system allows you to enter data daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly, depending on your preference.

- The Measure Your Progress section of WasteWise's online Partner Support offers helpful tools to find data sources, calculate waste reduction results, and determine the environmental and economic benefits of your waste reduction efforts.

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8 Report Annual Data

- Partners report total annual waste diversion data to the SMM data management system each year by March 31. These annual data submissions help you track your efforts and determine how much progress you have made towards your goals.

- Using the SMM data management system, enter municipal solid waste data as well as waste prevention and recycling data. The WasteWise Materials Glossary can help determine how to categorize the materials you recycle.

- Reporting annual data is required to remain an active participant in WasteWise. WasteWise uses the annual data reported to determine award winners and highlight accomplishments on the WasteWise website.

9 Analyze Progress & Reevaluate Programs

- After compiling annual data, you can examine opportunities to further increase your waste prevention and recycling activities. Partners must set a quantitative, self-directed goal as part of their data submission each year. This goal should reflect a percentage increase in waste diverted (a combination of waste prevention and recycling tonnage) compared to the previous year.

- For example:

  ➡ **Total Tons of Waste Prevention for Reporting Year:** 100 tons

  ➡ **Goal for Next Year:** Increase waste diversion by 7% (7 tons)

  ➡ **Meeting Your Goal:** At least 107 tons of waste diverted in the following year

- Analyzing your program will help you set and meet your annual waste diversion goals each year. Reevaluate activities to determine which ones work and which ones don't. Expand upon your successful activities and try to be innovative with your WasteWise related activities.

10 Promote Success & Maintain Momentum

- All reporting partners receive their own EPA Climate Profile, an educational tool that converts waste prevention and recycling accomplishments into equivalent greenhouse gas reductions. Letting the general public know about your WasteWise efforts demonstrates your commitment to improving the environment and your community.

- Provide regular updates on progress and share your success with management, employees, and the general public. Internal promotion of your achievements can help maintain momentum, enhance awareness, and sustain upper management support.

- You can also incorporate the WasteWise logo within your organization's website, letterhead, newsletters, and corporate reports. Additional ideas to promote your WasteWise efforts can be found under Announce Your Achievements.

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