

How-to Conduct a Facility Walk-Through

A walk-through provides an opportunity to observe the connection between the types of waste generated and the actual waste-generating activities or processes. The team should be careful during the walk-through not only to record the types of waste observed and how waste is generated, but also to consider the potential waste reduction opportunities for increasing the efficiency of these operations.

If possible, schedule the walk-through just before trash pickups to allow a sufficient amount of waste to accumulate. Avoid scheduling it on or around holidays, company parties, or other special events that would produce wastes not representative of a normal workday.

Before conducting the walk-through, the team should inform the function area or department managers of the assessment and arrange interviews with employees. The interviews offer important additional detail on waste generation and removal practices. Moreover, interviews help keep employees informed and interested in the evolving waste reduction program, and offer an opportunity to ask questions. Employees also can be a valuable source of ideas for reducing waste.

During the walk-through, ask questions about variations in daily waste generation. For example, periodic deliveries might result in more discards on the delivery day. In addition, ask about any recent or upcoming changes within the function area or department, such as new equipment or procedures that could alter the types or amount of waste generated. The worksheet is formatted so that you can print it out and use it to record your findings as you walk through your facility.

Be sure to pay close attention to areas and operations that tend to generate the largest amounts of waste, such as shipping and receiving departments, copying areas, cafeterias, assembly lines, and offices. Remember to include a review of the grounds maintenance operations. While conducting the walk-through, watch closely for activities and equipment that generate unnecessary waste, as well as waste reduction efforts that are already in place.

Use the worksheet to record the findings of your walk-through by filling in the white spaces only. All other colored spaces will be automatically populated. Organizations assessing multiple function areas or departments might wish to complete a worksheet for each function area or department.