



City of Westminster  
COMMERCIAL WASTE

# 9 Quick Tips

for reducing waste to save time,  
money and the environment







## Reduce over-ordering goods and consumables

A lot of what we buy never gets used because it was ordered in excess or simply forgotten. Most store rooms contain items that were wrongly purchased, in excessive quantities or quickly became outdated and obsolete (examples include: CDs, DVDs, Mini-Discs, floppy disks, fax machines etc.). When the stockroom is then finally cleaned out, these items are usually thrown away without further thought. Managing your supplies and improving housekeeping can reduce and avoid waste. Not to mention the money you will save from better managing what you buy.

### What I can do:

Think about reusable options before ordering supplies. Durable items last much longer than disposable ones. For example, ceramic mugs instead of plastic cups and refillable water bottles.

Avoid buying more than you need. Ensure staff members who look after ordering and procurement have completed a stock check to avoid surplus.

Choose natural materials that are renewable, easy to reuse, easy to recycle and won't cause environmental harm when disposed of, such as glass, ceramics, metal, paper, cardboard, and wood.

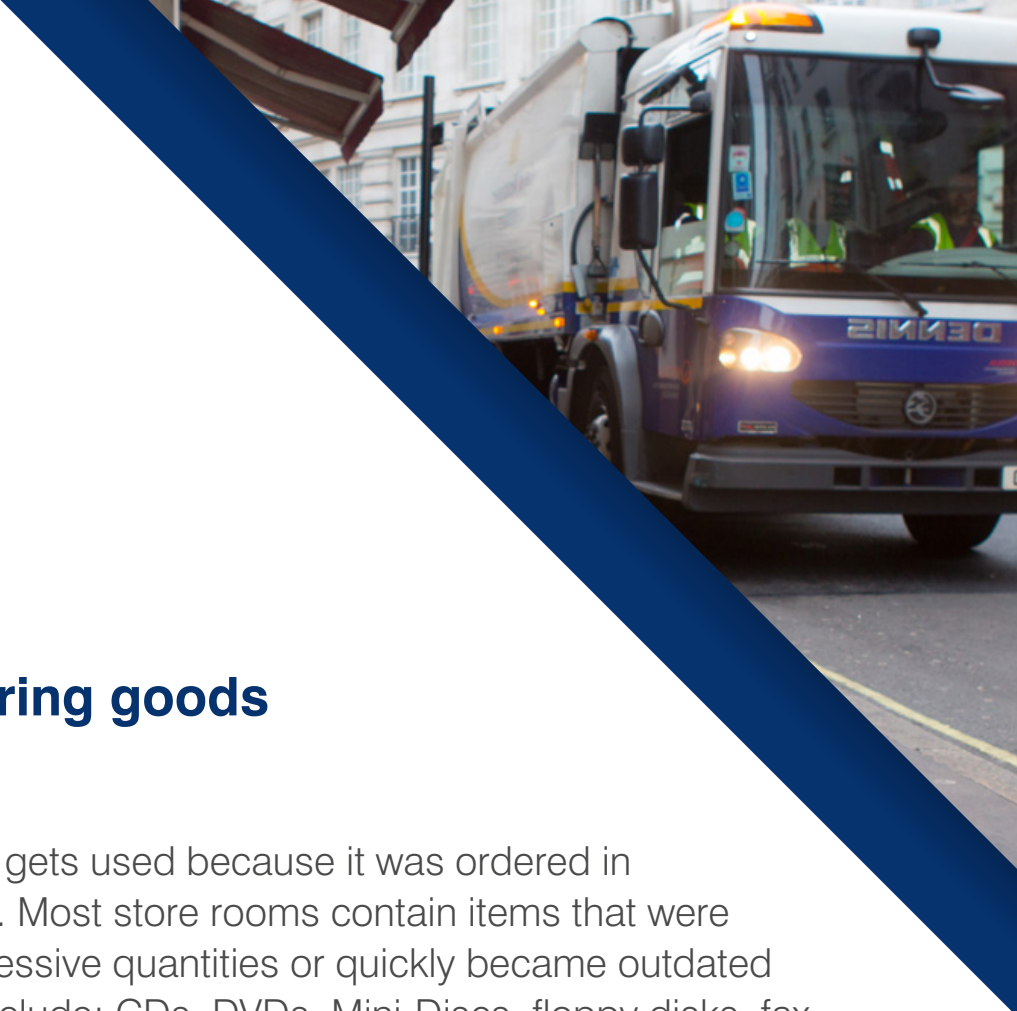
Buy products with recycled content such as paper, tissues and packaging materials.

Can you insist that your suppliers work with you on reducing packaging materials and use recycled materials? Can disposable items such as boxes be replaced with reusable crates and totes?

Rechargeable items such as batteries are a more durable and cheaper option compared to disposable ones.

If people are eating at work, real kitchenware and utensils can make a difference over single-use plastic cups, plates and cutlery. Although improvements have been made to make **black plastic recyclable**, the majority is still undetectable by material recovery facilities. **PET** and **HDPE** bottles are the best types of plastic to recycle.

Recycling does not solve the environmental issues we face; it simply addresses one of the symptoms. The best possible way to contribute to a better environment is to reduce the amount of waste created.







## 2

### Don't throw out items others would appreciate

According to a **WRAP study**, approximately 200,000 desks and 295,000 office chairs are reused in some way in the UK every year which is only 14% of desks that reach their end of life each year, the remaining 86% goes to landfill, energy recovery or recycling.

#### What you can do:

Avoid throwing away your office furniture if it can be of use to someone else. However, if you must get rid of any furniture, investigate if local charities will accept them. Some charities such as the **British Heart Foundation** can take reusable furniture off your hands. Specialist second-hand shops also appreciate used furniture as well as organisations who run reuse or furniture take-back schemes.

Reusing items is one of the most **efficient strategies** for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If you require equipment and office furniture (desks, chairs etc.), choose used, remanufactured, refurbished, sustainable, durable and recycled materials whenever possible. See this **case study** for more information.

Using renewable materials such as **wood** for packaging, like crates and pallets, makes a big difference since it is sustainable and can also be reused. Wood is also **more hygienic**.

Items that are more difficult to recycle, like batteries or printer cartridges, can often be collected for free by using designated take-back schemes and drop off points.

**Find out more about what  
you can recycle for free**

If you can't easily dispose of your items, you can always use our **bulky waste collection service**. We can collect your goods on an ad-hoc basis and take them to designated recovery or recycling facilities where they will be reused or recycled.



# 3

## Stop wasting food

Did you know **one-third** of all food produced in the world is either lost or wasted and **75%** of all food that is thrown away is edible? To save money and reduce waste, it is time to cut down on the amount of avoidable food waste your business throws away.

### What you can do:

Track and measure food waste in your organisation. Figure out exactly what is being disposed of and how often, whether there is any surplus food and manage it accordingly (i.e. reducing your orders).

Bring to work only what you're going to eat and look at how you store food. Good storage conditions prevent food from spoiling. If you entertain clients at work, try not to order too much food.

Inspire employees to contribute to reducing food waste. Are you composting your tea bags and fruit and vegetable peelings? Use a first-in-last-out storage principle which avoids food accumulating in the back of cupboards and fridges unused until it has expired and needs to be thrown away. Good housekeeping can avoid a lot of food from being wasted.

Our **on-the-go lunch habits** generate 11bn pieces of packaging waste every year. Could you encourage your colleagues to use reusable containers rather than disposable packaging?

Follow WRAP's **national food waste programs**. Whether you are in manufacturing, retail or hospitality of food services; they provide expertise and guidance on your food waste habits.

Educate yourself with WRAP's **food case studies**, which show how businesses have reduced waste and saved money.

Use our **food waste collection service** to dispose of your food waste. With this service, you can recycle:

- Meat and fish leftovers including bones
- Eggs and all dairy products
- Vegetables and fruit including any peelings
- Bread, cake and pastries
- Coffee grounds and tea bags
- Flowers and floral decorations (not plastic and textile)

After your food waste is collected, it is sent for treatment in an **anaerobic digestion facility** where it is then turned into renewable energy (biogas) and fertilisers for agricultural use. **See here** for advice on what sort of internal arrangements can help you segregate your business' food waste.

**Download our Animal By-Products Guide**







# 4

## Stop wasting paper

Most of the waste produced by offices and retailers consists of paper and cardboard. Paper is a resource that can be recycled up to **five times** and on average, one office worker will use up to **45 sheets of paper** per day. European paper and cardboard recycling rates are already at 86% but we can still easily do more.

### What you can do:

Reduce the number of desk-side printers and instead have centralised office printers or multi-functional devices. This has been **shown** to reduce wasteful or unnecessary printing. Print double-sided (using both sides can reduce paper usage by **50%**) or try going completely paperless; the rise in online collaboration tools has made this much easier.

Use thinner recycled paper with a weight of 80gsm. This means there is less material for each page. Reuse envelopes, folders, lever arches and scraps of paper (for notes or scribbles) whenever possible.

Use electronic or online communication (email, calls, instant messaging etc.) instead of letters, invoices and statements. Verify if there are any office activities or processes that can be converted to online versions to reduce unnecessary printing.

Buy recycled paper and invest in digital technology, using online platforms like **Google Drive** and **DocuSign** to share files and sign documents to prevent people from printing and wasting paper.



# 5

## Stop waste coming in through the mail

How often do you receive junk mail during the week? And how often do you throw it directly into a bin without opening it? Now imagine all the other businesses in Westminster doing the same. That is a lot of wasted paper. Junk mail is still an issue and it is time to stop waste coming in through the post.

### What you can do:

Give yourself one month to send back everything you do not want to the original sender and ask to be taken off their list (this is similar to unsubscribing from an email list).

To stop unsolicited mail, contact [Mailing Preference Service](#) and [Royal Mail](#).

Whenever you give out your name and company address going forward, make sure to specify that your details will not be used for promotions or passed on to third parties.

Assess how many magazines and daily publications your organisation really needs. Do these publications merely serve a 'decorative purpose', lying unread on desks and in communal areas? Can hardcopy subscriptions be replaced with online versions?





# 6

## Segregate different waste materials

Throwing away everything as general waste is inefficient, it makes your waste management messy and it is costly to dispose of. The waste regulations outlined in the [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) will bring in new requirements for businesses to segregate their waste for recycling and will change how businesses approach their waste management. The time is now for all businesses to properly segregate materials for recycling and reduce the volume of waste they produce.

The quality of the materials captured for recycling needs to improve. If recycling is contaminated with non-recyclable materials or is not clean, it can only be disposed of as general waste. Some recycling companies have exported these troublesome low-quality materials to the Far East. However, [bans](#) on importing low-quality materials convey the message that we need to do more to recycle the right way.

### What you can do:

Recycling initiatives can succeed or fail as a result of the internal bins and signage provided. There should be a uniform type across the premises. Use clear labelling or stickers on internal bins to differentiate general waste from the recyclable waste stream. Location is also essential, for example, have a separate bin for food waste in the kitchen and place a paper recycling bin next to the printers. You can [download our posters](#) to clearly label recycling points and order our [free bin stickers](#) to ensure all your internal bins have information on them on what exactly to put in them.

Avoid having under-desk bins or single waste bins since they promote poor recycling behaviour. All waste streams should be co-located at centralised recycling points around your premises. This helps avoid contamination or staff not recycling at all. [Not having desk-side bins](#) will also save you expenditure on having your cleaners empty them every day.

**Download our poster on what  
waste goes where**





Waste legislation, such as the [Resources and Waste Strategy](#), will require businesses to segregate the following waste streams:

- **Offices** should keep general waste, paper/cardboard, mixed packaging (cans, plastics, glass, cartons) as well as food waste, if they produce over 5kg of it in a week, segregated.
- **Retail and shops** must ensure they keep paper/cardboard, general waste, mixed packaging (glass, cans, cartons, plastics) and food waste (if they sell food) segregated from each other.
- **Hospitality** businesses must segregate glass packaging, paper/cardboard if produced in large volumes, general waste and packaging (plastics, cans, cartons).
- **Institutions** such as museums, schools, civil societies, media offices etc. should segregate paper/cardboard, packaging (plastics, glass, cans, cartons), general waste and food waste if on-site food and catering is provided to visitors, guests and/or staff.

All businesses should make specialist collection arrangements with us for the safe disposal or recycling of batteries, printer cartridges, large and small electrical appliances, clinical and hazardous waste. Some items can be recycled for free through [take-back schemes](#).

## Recycling Performance Calculator

Our recycling performance calculator is the first step to take when trying to monitor and improve your recycling efforts. It provides you with a full breakdown of how much waste you are producing per year in tonnes (per material) and will calculate a recycling percentage based on your results. Your recycling efforts and waste management plan are more likely to succeed if you know your starting point.

[Calculate your recycling performance](#)

[Download the ultimate guide to recycling waste for your business](#)

## Communication to staff, visitors and guests

Even well-thought-out recycling and waste plans fail when no one is communicating to staff, visitors and guests on how waste should be managed.

Make sure recycling and waste segregation information is easily accessible to staff (online, via posters, stickers, emails and even workshops when internal changes are being made).

## Measuring progress and reporting

If you would like to measure your progress, ask a member of our team for a performance report. First, you will need to establish a starting point (baseline) from which to improve. A good way of establishing your baseline is through one of our free waste audits. Here we assess what you have in place and make recommendations on what to improve. The audit will allow our experts to identify the services your business requires. They will provide you with tips on waste reduction, segregation, waste management, training and valuable insight into how you can take your waste management to the next level.

[Book a waste audit](#)







## Stop using inefficient waste collections by other providers

Traffic congestion and air pollution cost the business community millions of pounds every year. It can also seriously affect the health of those working, visiting and living in Westminster. Private waste collections are a part of the problem since they duplicate journeys compared to our collection model. Private collections increase congestion and pollution, and fail to add any genuine value.

The City Council operates the largest waste management fleet in London and has worked hard to ensure we are leaders in our industry when working to find innovative ways we can reduce traffic emissions. In April 2019, Transport for London introduced the Ultra-Low Emission Zone with the intention of improving poor air quality in Westminster – which, at 65%, is mostly caused as a result of traffic exhaust emissions.

In September 2019 our first two **LAPV** award winning **26-tonne electric Refuse Collection Vehicles (eRCV)**

were successfully launched. This project began with the idea of upcycling old diesel trucks and repowering them with new electric engines to reduce harmful emissions. When you consider the fact that converting one waste collection vehicle to fully electric is the equivalent of taking

**30 diesel-powered cars** off the street, it makes a big difference in air quality. By taking the first steps in taking electric Refuse Collection Vehicles on the streets of Westminster, we are leading the way for sustainability in our industry.





# 8

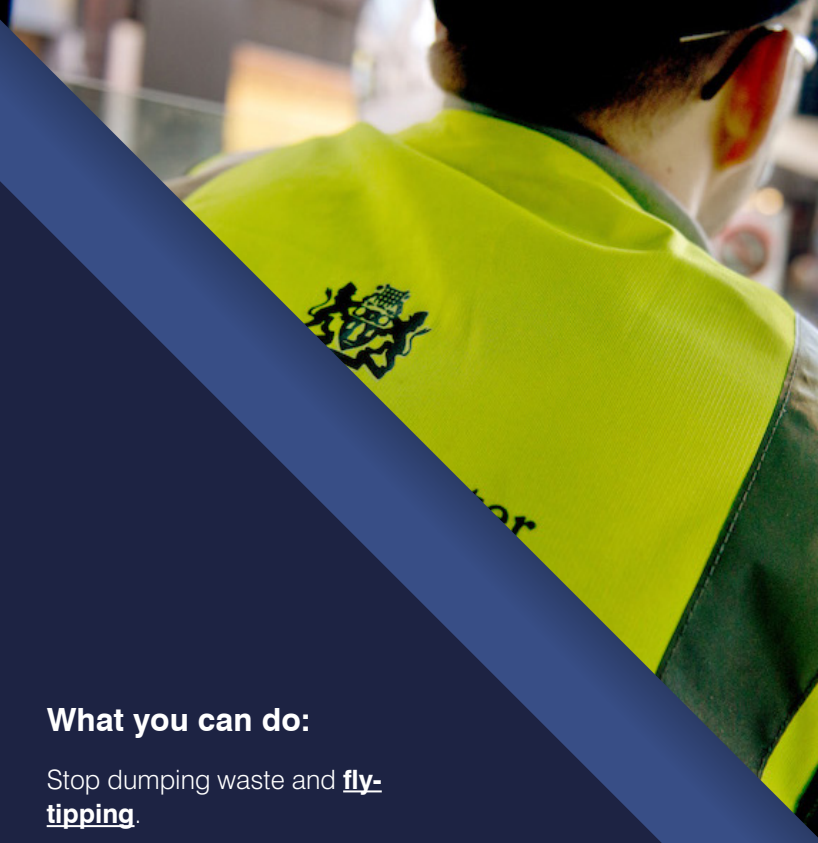
## Stop incurring waste fines

Complaints about poorly managed commercial waste from businesses are in the top 3 of all complaints which the City Council receives. That is why we want to help you get it right.

When waste is not properly managed it can lead to fines being issued, for example, when it is on the street, outside the collection times or when it is dumped in ordinary black bags. Businesses are accountable when its waste is dumped somewhere by someone else, an illegal waste collector for example. In the City of Westminster, the enforcement of waste regulations is looked after by our [City Inspectors](#) who are responsible for [investigating fly-tipping](#) and the mismanagement of commercial waste. Commercial Waste Services does not look after waste enforcement. It is part of your business' legal responsibilities to ensure that whoever collects your waste disposes of it correctly and legally.

**Download our '5 steps to rubbish  
and recycling collections' guide**





## Duty of care and recycling

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty of care on all businesses to ensure waste is stored, transported and disposed of without harming the environment.

### What that means:

- Ensure your waste is transported by a licensed waste carrier – e.g. Westminster City Council.
- Separate recyclables from non-recyclable waste and keep them separated at all times
- Make special collection arrangements with us for hazardous, clinical, appliances and bulky waste
- Complete an annual **Waste Transfer Note (WTN)** to show you have given your waste to a licensed waste carrier and where this carrier took it to. By law, you must keep a copy of your WTN for two years.
- Have adequate waste storage space which can accommodate three days' worth of waste output.

**Find out how to store your waste correctly**

## How we can help you comply

If you are unsure about anything around waste and recycling then please talk to us so we can help. We can give you all the advice and support you might need to help your business stay within the law.

## What you can do:

Stop dumping waste and **fly-tipping**.

If you have off-street storage space, we strongly recommend using waste and recycling bins rather than single-use plastic bags when presenting your waste for collection. We are actively working on phasing out the use of Westminster's streets for the collection of waste in plastic bags. We do appreciate that in some scenarios bins cannot be used because of lack of storage space. When placing your waste out for collections in plastic bags please pay attention to the collection times in your street. Please see this page on **putting waste bags out correctly in Westminster** for more information.

Ensure you only give your waste and recycling to a professional licensed collector such as Westminster City Council Commercial Waste Services and ensure you have a commercial waste arrangement set up. It is easy and hassle-free. **Get a quote today.**

If you have created stains on the pavement because of leaking bags of waste, then ask our **deep cleaning service** to help.



# 9

## Stop sending your waste and recycling abroad

Every year, private commercial waste collectors send staggering amounts of business waste from recycling centres and collections **abroad** for disposal and 'recycling'. For decades, this meant easy 'recycling', but the environmental cost of this was considerable.

This system of shipping our mess elsewhere is not sustainable, and rightly so, (developing) countries in the Far East have taken **measures** to stop this waste heading their way.

### What you can do:

We all know that our waste and recycling is collected at certain times each day, but do you actually know where your waste is sent to afterwards? Collecting waste and recycling is only the first part of the process before it finally gets recycled or disposed of.

We are proud to say that all of the waste we collect is disposed of within the UK, with the majority processed in facilities local to Westminster. This is unlike other waste collectors who often export waste across Europe to dispose of it.

By providing local services in Westminster, we're helping to minimise the pollution to our environment through harmful emissions — something that's very important to us. It also ensures adherence with the London Mayor's London Environment Strategy which aims to keep waste resources within the M25, ensuring other communities are not burdened with it.

If you would like to see where we take the recycling and waste we collect from you then see our interactive map by clicking the button below.

**Find out where your recycling goes**







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COMMERCIAL WASTE



If you're interested in improving your waste management, our waste audit will identify the individual services that your business requires. A member of our team will come to your premises at a time that suits you and provide you with valuable insight into how you can take your waste management to the next level.

