

# How to Run a Basic School Cafeteria Waste Audit

A basic waste audit is a good way to find out how much waste is going from the school cafeteria to the incinerator. It will give you baseline data that can be used to measure how successful you are when, later on, you separate liquids, organics, and recyclables out of the trash.

## What you need:

- Excel spreadsheet or paper recording sheets (and a clipboard)
- Scale - the DPW can provide a luggage scale for you to use
- Large tub with handles - the tub is for holding each bag of trash while you're weighing it
- Trash barrel on wheels for transporting bags of trash
- Gloves (either disposable or work)
- (Optional) Phone to record the event or for entering data

## Where to have the audit:

- The school cafeteria is the obvious place because that's where the students are and where the trash is
- Alternative locations: Outside the main door of the school? In the science room?

## Working with the custodian(s) and collecting the trash for weighing:

- Make sure the custodians know what you're up to. They are great at getting the trash emptied during and after every lunch. If they know the plan, they can set the trash aside for you to weigh when you're ready. The custodian will appreciate if, when you're finished, you return the trash to a designated spot near the dumpster so they can dispose of it.
- It's best to weigh the trash at the end of the meal when all the tables have been cleared.

## Weighing and recording with a luggage scale

- Weigh the empty tub first so you can allow for its weight in the tally.
- Put a bag of trash in the tub, pick up the tub (hooking it onto the scale), and record its weight minus the weight of the tub.
- Record and repeat until you've weighed all the bags of trash.

## Cleanup:

- Take all those bags of trash back to the agreed upon area near the dumpster. Alert the custodian(s) that they are there so they can be disposed of properly and in a timely manner.