

Environmental Waste Handling Audit

A practical check on control, not just compliance

Why This Matters

Hazardous waste is part of daily operations in most print facilities. In many shops, it's handled correctly—but not always managed intentionally. That's where issues show up:

- higher disposal costs
- limited reuse options
- unclear materials
- unnecessary compliance risk

Small decisions—mixing materials, delaying removal, unclear labeling—add up over time. This audit is designed to help you step back and answer a simple question: **Do we have control of our waste streams, or are we reacting to them?**

How to Use This

Walk your facility. Answer honestly. Don't overthink it. If something isn't clearly a *YES*, then it is a *NO*. Once you and your teams have completed the audit, count the check boxes that were a *NO*. *These are your gaps.*

1. Waste Awareness

- ☐ We can list every waste stream we generate
- ☐ Each stream has a defined classification (not assumed)
- ☐ We understand how each stream is disposed of (reuse, fuel blend, landfill, incineration)
- ☐ We know what changes the classification (mixing, contamination, storage)

2. Separation & Handling

- ☐ Waste streams are kept separate intentionally
- ☐ Materials are not combined “for convenience”
- ☐ Staff understand what can and cannot be mixed
- ☐ There is clear ownership of waste handling (not “whoever is there”)

3. Storage & Labeling

- ☐ All containers are clearly labeled and legible
- ☐ Labels match the actual contents
- ☐ Storage areas are defined (not scattered)
- ☐ Containers are in good condition (no degradation, leaks, or unknowns)
- ☐ Waste is not sitting in temporary or unapproved containers

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4. Time & Condition

- ☐ No waste has been sitting longer than 12 months
- ☐ We have a defined removal schedule (not reactive)
- ☐ Older materials are reviewed before they become unknown
- ☐ We are confident in the condition of everything currently stored

5. Documentation & Training

- ☐ SDS sheets are accessible and current
- ☐ Waste profiles are completed before pickup—not at pickup
- ☐ Anyone signing a manifest understands what they are signing
- ☐ Staff handling waste are properly trained (RCRA/DOT where applicable)

6. Pickup & Process Discipline

- ☐ Pickups are scheduled based on plan—not space constraints
- ☐ We do not add unprofiled materials at the last minute
- ☐ We understand the cost impact of how we handle waste—not just how much we generate
- ☐ We have reviewed our process in the last 12 months

Scoring

Count the check boxes that were a *NO*. *These are your gaps*. Score _____ Date _____

0–4 gaps: You have control. Focus on consistency and getting to 0 gaps.

5–9 gaps: You're operating with avoidable cost and risk.

10+ gaps: Waste handling is reactive. Expect higher cost, more friction, and potential compliance exposure.

One Question That Matters

If you had to remove every waste container in your facility tomorrow— **Would you know exactly what's in each one and how it should be handled?** If not, start there.

- 2 Need support? PIA MidAmerica partners with Clean Earth to provide members with preferred pricing, expert guidance, and hands-on support to simplify hazardous waste management. Contact us to learn more: info@piamidam.org