

## Household Waste Audit Instructions

The following steps will guide your household (office, classroom, etc...) through an audit of the materials you discard and give you an idea of ways to **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle** and **Compost** more and send less to the landfill.

### Materials you will need:

- \_\_ 1 large tarp
- \_\_ pen/pencil
- \_\_ bathroom scale (optional)

### Follow these steps:

**Step 1.** Choose a typical day in your household and pick a starting and ending time.

This waste audit will begin at \_\_\_\_am and end at \_\_\_\_pm on \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

**Step 2.** Prior to your starting time, spread the tarp in a secure area – away from dogs, small children, etc....

Divide the tarp into 4 categories: *Donate, Compost, Recycle, Landfill*

**Step 3.** Remove or mark off the trash cans, recycling bins and other receptacles you normally use. Instead, throughout the day, whenever you have an item to discard, place it onto the tarp in the appropriate section. Continue this from the starting time to the ending time you have chosen.

**Step 4.** At the end of the time period, gather all participants around the tarp. You will need the waste audit chart (page 2), a pencil and a bathroom scale (if you have chosen to use one). Take a minute to observe the tarp and make sure the items are correctly sorted into the categories. If there are items that are difficult to place, set them aside for later. Once the items are set, determine the percentage of each category compared to the total amount of material placed on the tarp. For instance, if recyclable materials take up one-half of the tarp, mark  $\frac{1}{2}$  or 50% in the percentage column.

**Step 5.** Record this percentage for each category, then list the individual items on the tarp by category. Discuss your waste stream as a group. How much overall can you divert from the landfill? Use what you discover to influence how you source and use materials going forward. See the Challenge column for more ideas.

**Step 6. (Optional)** Use the bathroom scale if you would like to weigh each category rather than estimate the percentage. If you plan to repeat this audit to track your progress over time, it may be beneficial to have the weight recorded for comparison. For example, it will allow you to track whether or not you are reducing the total amount of material you discard, rather than just the breakdown of how your items are disposed.



# Household Waste Audit Chart

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time \_\_\_\_\_ Stop Time \_\_\_\_\_

Material	Estimate the % (or record the weight) in comparison to the total amount on the tarp	List of Items	Challenge Ideas
<p><b>Donate</b> Used clothing, gear, toys, books, household items that can be delivered to local thrift shops and charitable organizations. The Recycling Center accepts used clothing and books for distribution to larger communities once local donation sites are at capacity.</p>			<p>Well done donating used items to benefit others and reduce the amount of material in the waste stream! Do you also purchase used items when possible? Do you know the local reuse, resale and repair services available?</p>
<p><b>Compost</b> All yard waste is currently accepted for composting at the Teton County Trash Transfer Station. The fee is 3.5¢ per pound. Food waste is not yet accepted for municipal scale composting. This service is anticipated in Teton County by 2020.</p>			<p>Consider backyard composting or vermicomposting as a household food waste solution. Find a local composting mentor or plan to attend the annual backyard composting workshop sponsored by Teton County ISWR in May/June 2017.</p>
<p><b>Recycle</b> Items accepted for recycling in Teton County include: aluminum, glass, plastic #1 &amp; #2 bottles, newspaper, office paper, magazines, corrugated cardboard, electronics, scrap metal, bike tires and tubes, propane containers, bear spray, batteries, fluorescent lightbulbs and household hazardous waste. Visit <a href="http://www.tetonwyo.org/recycle">www.tetonwyo.org/recycle</a> for more info.</p>			<p>Great job! By recycling aluminum cans, you have conserved 96% of the energy required to manufacture cans from raw materials. Remember to choose reusable beverage containers and buy recycled content items when possible.</p>
<p><b>Landfill</b> Items not listed above should be discarded as trash and will be disposed of in a landfill over 100 miles away. Common household items sent to the landfill include: non-recyclable #1 &amp; #2 plastics (clamshell containers, paint buckets, etc.); plastics #3-7; Styrofoam; paperboard (cereal boxes); food waste (until composting services become available).</p>			<p>What are some ideas to <b>Reduce</b> the amount of these items in your waste stream in the future? Are there choices you can make at the time of purchase that would result in fewer landfill bound materials?</p>