



FOOD WASTE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

FACT SHEET FOR PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICES



Food waste accounts for as much as 40% of general waste arising from offices. This fact sheet identifies how food waste can be managed better in your workplace, by adopting the principles of waste prevention, reduction, and segregation.

Food waste in the workplace

Food waste produces up to 10% of all global carbon emissions so reducing it is one of the most effective actions you can take to address climate change. As food waste is a significant proportion of office waste, there is great potential for making savings too. This makes reducing food waste in your workplace an important action to be included in your Resource Efficiency Action Plan (REAP).



The Cost

The true cost of food waste including purchase cost, cooking cost and disposal is estimated to be ~€3/ kg. If your workplace fills one 240 litre food waste bin each week (estimated to typically weigh 85kgs), this could be costing up to €232 per week. This is equivalent to losses of €12,000/ per year in wasted food.

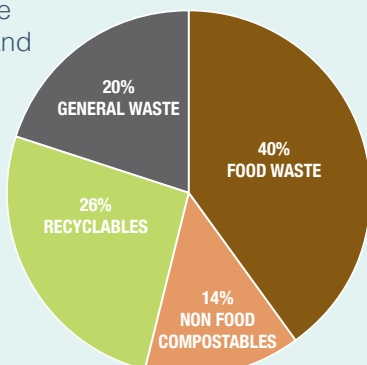
FIRST STEPS TO MANAGING FOOD WASTE

Step 1 - Review your waste bills

Using the information in your waste bills will allow you to estimate how much food waste is arising in your offices.



- If you have a food waste collection service (food waste bin), request annual weights collected from your waste contractor.
- If you don't have a food waste collection service, your food waste weight can be estimated as 40% of general waste.
- Alternatively, you can separate and weigh the food waste generated over a week and scale up for a year.



Composition of general waste bins from Irish Offices
Source: EPA

Step 2 - Benchmark Food Waste

Use the estimates of total food waste arising to calculate a benchmark for your office. This benchmark will allow you to set targets to reduce your total food waste for next year. The typical benchmark for offices is kg of food waste generated per employee per year.



$$\frac{\text{Annual food waste}}{\text{No. of employees}} = \text{Food waste per employee per annum}$$

Step 3 - Identify where food waste is arising

There are typically 3 areas in an office where food waste can arise:



General office area



Kitchenette



Serviced canteens



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Take actions to prevent, reduce and segregate food waste

Regardless of what food services you have in your office building, you can (a) minimise food waste generated in the first place and (b) segregate food waste from general waste and recycling – this will ensure it goes to the food waste bin and is managed responsibly.

ACTIONS FOR PREVENTION, REDUCTION, REUSE AND SEGREGATION OF FOOD WASTE

OFFICE AREA



Ensure that a **food waste bin collection** is available in your office so that food waste can be collected separately.



Locate **centralised collection bin systems** with **appropriate signage** to allow good food waste management.



Remove individual bins at desks to encourage staff to segregate waste and bring to centralised bins



Order less food. When providing food at events and meetings, order food for less people than expected to attend.

KITCHENETTE

Designate an area of the fridge, counter or cupboard to share extra food and leftovers with your colleagues.



Use a 3 bin system with one for food waste which is clearly marked.



Have a **kitty for shared essentials**, e.g milk and butter. This avoids doubling up on common items and reduces waste.



SERVICED CANTEEN

Catering contract. Include requirements for food waste benchmarks and a reduction plan.



The Irish food waste benchmark for workplace canteens is 78 grams of food waste per cover. Measure your food waste benchmark to see how it compares and aim to reduce it.



Menu Options. Offer half portions to reduce plate waste; plan and prepare menu options to use left-over food.



Remove canteen trays. This reduces waste coming back on plates by up to 30%. Research has shown that trays encourage diners to take more food than they can eat.



Use **smaller serving plates** and offer half portion sizes to reduce the amount of uneaten food.



Use **reusable or compostable containers** for takeaway food.



SUCCESS STORIES

Sodexo Catering servicing a Dublin IT company managed to **reduce food waste by 28%**. This was achieved mainly by better planning leading to a reduction in unserved food.



The Department of Rural and Community Development **reduced general waste by 90%** at their Ballina office by introducing food waste bins.

