



WASTE PREVENTION, REDUCTION AND REUSE FACT SHEET FOR PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICES

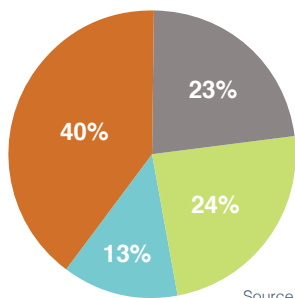


Taking actions to prevent waste and to reduce and reuse materials in the public sector will have a positive impact on the environment by reducing resource consumption, the need for waste management and expenditure.

Paper Waste

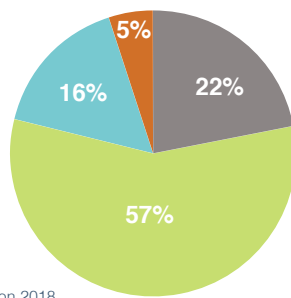
Paper is the top material wasted in Irish offices. Together with associated printing, paper is a significant cost for offices in terms of purchase, confidential shredding, and waste recycling/disposal costs.

Irish Offices General Waste Bin



Source: EPA Waste Characterisation 2018

Irish Offices Mixed Recyclables Bin



■ Organic Waste ■ Other Waste ■ Paper ■ Plastic

What is a paper efficient office?

Average



45 sheets per person per day
20 reams per person per year

Efficient



16 sheets per person per day
7 reams per person per year

Source: WRAP UK and others.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING AND REDUCING PAPER WASTE IN YOUR OFFICE

Measure expenditure

Quantify current annual spend on paper purchasing, printing, confidential disposal, and recycling costs.



Print settings

Ensure that the print settings of office computers and printers are centrally set to double-sided format as default.



Measure volumes

Quantify current annual volumes of paper consumed and managed in terms of purchased, confidential disposal, and recycling.



Print services

Implementing managed print services within your office will allow you to save paper use through forced double sided print, PIN or ID Card authentication, letterhead digital templates, etc.



Benchmark your paper use

Calculate the reams of paper used per employee per year and compare to the estimated average of 20 reams per person per year and to the good practice of 7 reams of paper per person/year.



Set targets to reduce paper usage within your office.

Buy recycled

Buy recycled paper with the highest percentage of post-consumer waste, (ideally 100%), and which meets the Irish green public procurement criteria for paper, e.g. has an EU Ecolabel or similar independent third party label. The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has recycled paper products under its framework contracts.



Get digital

Promote and train staff to use IT communications and systems for work activities including electronic document management.



Use lighter paper

Use lighter weight paper which means less material for each page and less energy use in its manufacture and printing. 80 grams per square metre (gsm) paper is standard and is suitable for routine printing.





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Tips for ensuring paper recycling takes place



Communication

Ensure staff are clear about what type of material goes in the confidential bins and what goes in the regular recycling bins – this will reduce your confidential paper disposal costs.

Waste segregation

Ensure paper waste can be segregated and recycled through the provision of centralised recycling bins and trays for waste paper on desks. Use signage, and regular promotion to staff to help raise awareness.



Cleaning staff

Ensure cleaning staff are aware of waste segregation procedures and that they place bagged waste in the right bins in waste area.



Single-use plastics

The Government has introduced a ban on certain single-use plastic items in the public sector covering single-use plastic cups, cutlery and straws. Since July 2021 the sale of certain single-use plastic items has been banned including: cutlery, plates, stirrers, chopsticks, straws, expanded polystyrene single use food and beverage containers. All oxo-degradable plastic products are also banned.

Tips for preventing and reducing single use plastics

Replace bottled water with water coolers attached to the mains water supply. Encourage employees to use their own drinking glass or reusable water bottle. Provide reusable bottles to staff free of charge as an incentive for an initial period.



Eliminate single use sachets of sauce such as ketchup and mayo and replace with bulk sauce dispensers.



Eliminate plastic bin liners in mixed dry recyclables bins as this waste is generally clean.



Encourage staff to use ceramic cups or their own "Keep Cups" for tea and coffee.



Paper Towels



Install and use energy efficient hand dryers in toilets rather than paper towels. This may marginally increase energy costs, but will be outweighed by eliminating the cost of purchasing paper and reducing landfill waste costs.

Office Equipment Reuse

Consider options to reuse office equipment such as IT, furniture, etc. before purchasing more. This reduces expenditure on new equipment and storage costs, reduces resource consumption and reduces waste.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT FOR EVERY TONNE OF FURNITURE RE-USED, 1.45 TONNES OF CARBON DIOXIDE (CO₂) EMISSIONS ARE REDUCED

Source: Wrap UK, based on sofas

Consider other options for purchasing IT computer equipment such as refurbishment or rental contracts.



Use the staff Intranet to highlight office furniture or equipment which is no longer needed in one area and could be used elsewhere by colleagues.



Keep a list of existing office equipment not in use and promote their reuse in preference to buying new items by different departments. Include a step in the pre-procurement process to review whether existing equipment or furniture could be reused rather than buying new.



SUCCESS STORIES

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine diverted 80,000 water bottles per annum from landfill by eliminating SUP water bottles and providing staff with reusable water bottles in six sites.

The EPA achieved a 50% reduction in the quantity of paper purchased by implementing online systems to support EPA activities, e.g. license applications, ongoing staff awareness raising and managed print services across all offices, e.g. ID card needed to print.

RTE eliminated the use of 312,000 plastic bin liners, 114,000 plastic cups and 99,000 plastic food containers annually, by using reusable bin liners, reusable cups and food containers.

Cork City Hall achieved €8,400 cost saving by replacing single-use plastic cups with reusable cups.

Wexford Co. Co. eliminated the use of 59,000 sheets of paper / annum and saved €3,500 by switching to online options for a variety of different functions.