

**Date****Name****Location**

<b>Material (estimated %)</b>	<b>General Waste</b>	<b>Recycling</b>	<b>FOGO</b>	<b>Cardboard (and paper)</b>
Cardboard				
Paper				
Glass				
Food organics				
Garden organics				
Aluminium, steel, metals				
Hard plastic				
Soft plastic				
Clothing & textiles				
E-waste				
Hazardous				
Mixed material (Coffee cups, tetrapak)				

# HOW TO DO A VISUAL MATERIALS AUDIT

## What is a visual materials audit?

Visual audits are an important tool for waste and recycling management and understanding your own waste profile. A visual audit is the practice of recording the percentages of different materials found in your different streams (recycling, food and organics, cardboard) on a regular basis.

## Why should I complete a visual materials audit?

Completing regular visual materials audits of your bins:

- improves your understanding of contamination
- highlights areas for improvement (e.g if you find 25% food organics in a general waste bin, this suggests you should introduce an organics stream and do some education with your traders and / or staff on how to use it correctly so no organics end up in general waste).
- reduce assumptions you are making and track changes of bin usage over time.

## How to do a visual materials audit

To complete a visual materials audits of your bins:

1. Wear appropriate safety gear (gloves, glasses, closed toe shoes) and receive approvals where necessary. Bring a whiteboard marker to fill out this sheet .
2. Open the lid of the bin (if there are bags inside, gently tear the bags open in preparation for step 3)
3. Look at the whole bin and determine the approximate percentage of the different materials. For example, the general waste bin had 35% food organics, 10% cardboard, 25% soft plastics and so on until you reach 100%. Write these percentages on the flip side of this page in the corresponding column with a whiteboard marker.
4. Complete this method for each stream (recycling, FOGO & cardboard).
5. Take a photo and save it so you can compare your visual materials audit over time

## How can I use this information?

Now you have your data:

1. Consider education: If you have found materials in the incorrect bin (e.g. there was 15% soft plastics in the cardboard bin) talk to your team about correct bin usage.
2. Glow up: Add some signage and colour coding to help them understand the right practices.
3. Consider new streams: If you have found a material which could be diverted (e.g. 25% food organics in the general waste bin) contact your waste contractor to introduce a new bin (e.g a 120L food and garden organics bin). Consider reducing the size or collection frequency (one less collection a week of general waste) to make the new bin cost neutral.