



# Managing waste in the transport industry

## Introduction

If you operate a small to medium transport company that offers road freight, fleet management or courier services, then this fact sheet could help you to:

- reduce your overheads
- improve your environmental performance
- be more competitive!

With rising waste disposal costs and pressure on industry to reuse and recycle waste materials and to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, this is a great time to improve waste management.

This fact sheet provides a range of practical and cost effective waste saving options. Some offer immediate savings or benefits while others may involve an upfront cost that can often be recovered within a few months or years.

## Major waste generating activities

Wastes in the transport industry are generated by activities such as freight transport, vehicle maintenance and cleaning, freight handling and warehousing operations.

Many of these wastes arise from the repair and servicing of vehicles and are hazardous or controlled (including tyres and wash water). They need to be managed in line with environmental licences and other permits but may still be reusable or recyclable. Avoiding such wastes can significantly reduce risk in the workplace and minimise expensive storage and disposal costs.

Other wastes, such as paper, printer cartridges, pallets and freight packaging materials, generated by office and warehousing activities can also be avoided, reused or recycled.

## Benefits of reducing waste

Improving waste management can benefit your business and the environment by:

- reducing the cost of purchasing new raw and processed materials (e.g. by selecting reusable packaging materials)
- reducing waste treatment and disposal costs (e.g. by finding alternative markets for used oil and other 'wastes')
- reducing environmental impacts associated with the consumption of resources and landfill disposal (e.g. by using

packaging materials made from recycled materials that can be easily separated and recycled again)

- improving your business' reputation and employee satisfaction by promoting an environmentally responsible image and providing a safer and more comfortable workplace.

## Things to consider when improving waste management practices

Implementing waste management improvements may require forward planning and some changes to the way your business operates. For example:

- Proposed actions (e.g. using steam to clean vehicles) may need to be discussed with managers, workplace safety representatives, unions, insurers and suppliers to ensure that they will not adversely affect productivity, work conditions or security.
- Employee training and management involvement are key factors to the success of energy reduction measures.
- Special licences or permits may be required by your business or contractors to store, treat, transport or dispose of hazardous and controlled wastes (e.g. used chemicals, batteries and tyres).
- Monitoring waste generation and disposal, such as checking collection contractors' invoices purchases, is important for environmental compliance and asset management (e.g. reusable pallets) and to measure (and reward!) improvements.

Some common waste reduction opportunities for small to medium transport companies are provided in the table following. The costs, savings and payback periods are provided as a rough guide only. They include estimates of up front costs such as capital, labour and installation, but do not include ongoing costs unless these are fundamental to the option itself (e.g. improved maintenance regimes).

The suitability and benefits of each option depend on the nature and size of your business and the scale of application. You should also check that they comply with local environment, safety and other requirements. The waste hierarchy provides a framework for managing waste: avoid; reduce; reuse; recycle; and dispose. Waste avoidance generally delivers the best financial and environmental outcomes.

\$ up to \$1,000	\$\$ \$1,000 - \$10,000	\$\$\$ \$10,000 - \$50,000	\$\$\$\$ \$50,000+		
PROCESS CHANGE			MAINTENANCE		
	OPTION	OPTION COST	SAVING	PAYBACK PERIOD	WASTE HIERARCHY
	Collect used oil, and other liquids when servicing vehicles for recycling (often free of charge). Drain used oil filters and send filters, automotive batteries and other metal components for recycling. Some wastes may be suitable for recycling on-site (e.g. coolant and solvent).	\$	Waste to landfill and waste water treatment	<1 year	Recycle/ Comply
	Review spill and chemical handling procedures to avoid spills. Use drip pans to collect leaks and spills rather than paying to dispose of (hazardous) used rags and absorbent materials.	\$	Hazardous waste treatment and disposal	<1 year	Avoid/ Recycle
	Collect and treat waste water for vehicle washing, landscape irrigation and other uses on-site.	\$\$	Water use and waste water treatment	2-7 years	Recycle
	Use dry cleaning methods (e.g. scraping, brushing or air cleaning of vehicle undercarriages and tyres) and rumble grids. Install steam and pressure wash systems to clean and degrease vehicles, parts and equipment.	\$ - \$\$	Water and chemical use and waste water treatment	<1 year (5-8 years for steam and pressure)	Avoid
	Minimise the amount of packaging and do not repackage items that have original packaging wherever possible. Select packaging that you or receivers can reuse or that is made from recycled content.	\$	Packaging and waste to landfill	<1 year	Avoid/ Reuse
	Use of packaging should be limited wherever possible. Use only the amount of packaging required for a delivery.	\$	Packaging waste to landfill	<1 year	Avoid
	Shred waste office paper for use as packaging protection media.	\$	Waste to landfill	1-2 years	Reuse
	Implement a co-mingled recycling system for paper and packaging waste. Separate and organise collection of other non-workshop wastes (e.g. free recycling of printer/photocopier ink cartridges). Place signs on bins or walls to show what can be placed in each container.	\$	Waste to landfill	Immediate	Recycle
	Repair damaged pallets for reuse or deliver to a recycling facility.	\$	Waste to landfill	<1 year	Reuse/ Recycle
	Implement a preventative maintenance program to extend life of parts and equipment and avoid downtime.	\$\$	Waste to landfill	2-5 years	Avoid

## Further information

If you would like further information, or to talk to someone who can help get you started, please contact Ai Group's Energy and Sustainable Business Helpdesk on **1300 733 752** or at [sustainablebusiness@aigroup.asn.au](mailto:sustainablebusiness@aigroup.asn.au) or visit the Ai Group website at [www.aigroup.com.au](http://www.aigroup.com.au).