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# WASTE HIERARCHY

What is the waste hierarchy, how it works, what you need to do to implement it.

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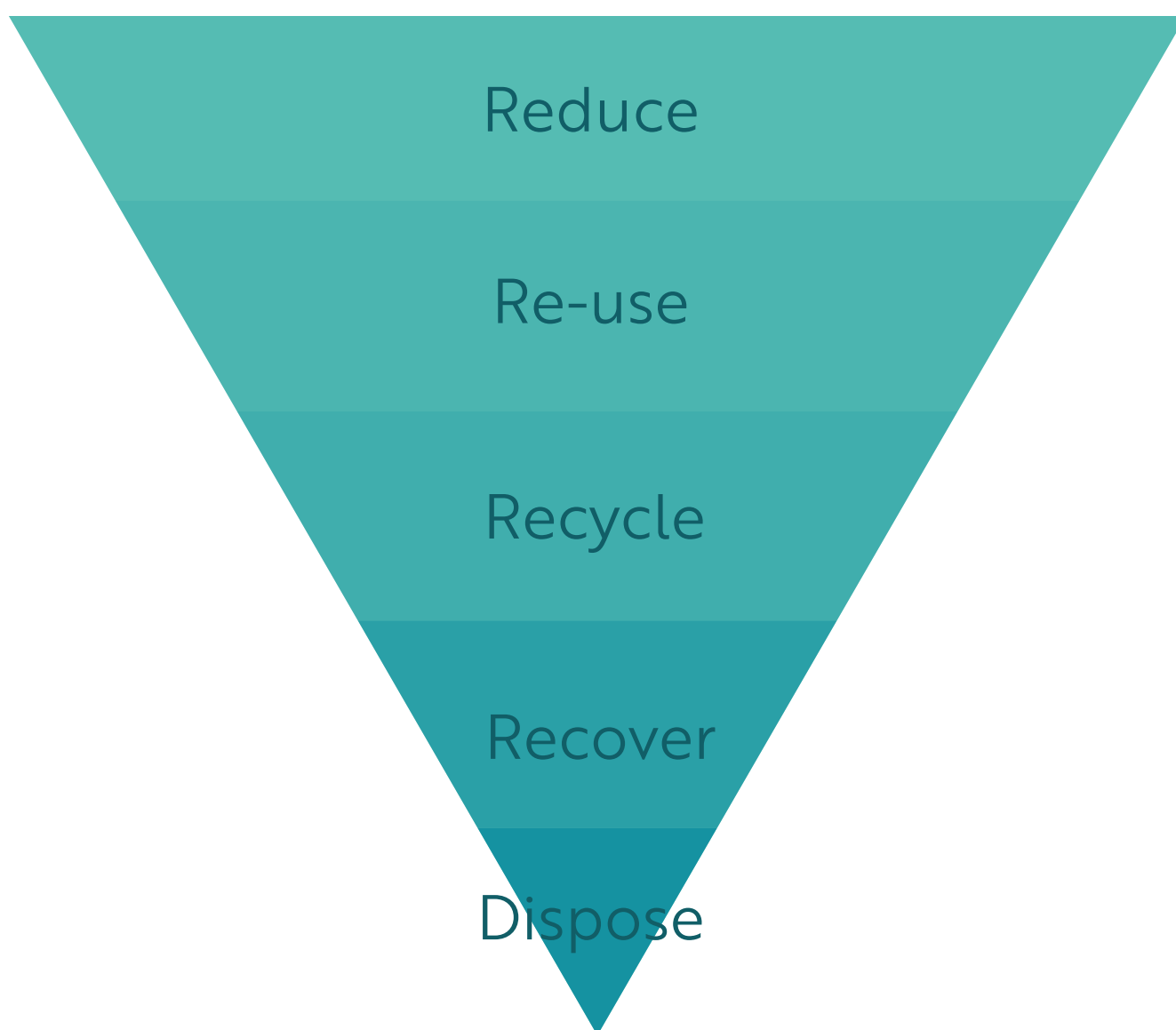




# What is the Waste Hierarchy?

The waste hierarchy orders waste management options according to what is best for the environment.

The aim should always be to prevent waste in the first place. When waste is unavoidable, it gives priority to re-use, then recycle, then recovery and last and definitely least, disposal (e.g. landfill).



## Do I need to follow the waste hierarchy?

If your business produces or handles waste, then yes. You should, within reasonable circumstances, apply the waste hierarchy to prevent waste, and to apply the hierarchy as a priority order when you transfer your waste to another person or business.

# But what does it mean?

## Reduce / Prevention

Using less material in design and manufacture. Keeping products for longer; re use. Using more environmentally friendly materials.



## Re-use

Checking, cleaning, repairing, refurbishing, whole items or spare parts. If you can't reuse it within the business look talk to staff, suppliers or the local community.



## Recycle

Giving waste a new lease of life, turning it into a new product. This would also include taking waste organic matter and food and composting it, to produce a quality compost.



## Recover

A way to recovery energy stored within a product. Includes anaerobic digestion, incineration with energy recovery, gasification and pyrolysis which produce energy (fuels, heat and power) and materials from waste.



## Dispose

The final resort is landfill and incineration without energy recovery



# Putting it into action

## What does it mean in practical terms?

Applying the waste hierarchy is good environmental practice but can also be a way to streamline your waste management and reduce costs.

### Step 1 - Research

The first step is to identify what waste you are producing and where it's going. Write down a list of all the waste products you have and how you currently manage it.

### Step 2 - Plan

Once you have your list of waste products, apply the waste hierarchy. By separating and segregating the waste, can you move it up the triangle, or perhaps eliminating it altogether?

### Step 3 - Review

Waste streams may vary at different times of the year depending on your clients or how busy you are. Make sure you regularly revisit the hierarchy and review each of your waste streams.

## Things to consider

There will be external factors that'll influence your decisions on waste generation and management, with the two main ones being:

- What options are available to you locally, regionally and nationally?
- Is it economically viable?

The amount of waste you produce and how you manage it is going to come down to the type and size of your business. Understanding your waste and applying the waste hierarchy will help you to minimise the waste you produce, streamline your process and ultimately save you money.

It may be helpful to look at the following questions and to discuss them with your waste management contractor:

1. What does the waste you create or handle consist of?
2. How can you prevent any of this waste?
3. Can the waste be prepared for reuse, can it be recycled or can any other value be recovered?
4. How can you or your waste contractor(s) help you to elevate your waste on the waste hierarchy scale?

## How can you reduce waste?

There are many ways that you can reduce waste. We've put together a few ideas of things you can do.

### Packaging

Re-use packaging received by your business and ask your suppliers to use re-useable packaging too.

### Drinking Water

Refill water containers from the tap rather than buying bottled water. If you work in the catering industry look into investing in a filtration system so that you can provide your clients with filtered bottled water.

### Reduce Food Waste

It's not just caterers that need to be reducing the amount of food waste they produce, all businesses within the industry should be looking at the food waste they and their staff produce.

### Sell / Donate / Swap

If you no longer need something could it be sold, donated or swapped? Do you know of anyone in your community that could benefit from it?

### Refurbish or Repair

Do you really need to get rid of it? Can you extend its life by refurbishing it or repairing it? You may not have the skills to do so within your business, but I'm sure you can find someone that can help.

### Hire or Lease

You can pretty much hire or lease most things. From computer equipment to office furniture and cars. But if you're set on buying then think about purchasing second-hand.

## Could more of my waste be recycled?

Different types of businesses process different waste and it's difficult to know what you can recycle, where and how.

The way you store and sort your waste can have an effect on how it can be recycled. It's always worth discussing with your waste management contractor how you can get the most value from your waste.

Remember to make sure that any service you use is legally permitted to take the waste and does what it says it will with it!



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