KEYSTONE environmental solutions

WHITE PAPER 05

# Measuring What Matters: Waste Data and ESG Reporting for Multi-Site Businesses

Which waste metrics to track, where to get reliable data, and how to turn hauler invoices into reporting your leadership and customers can use.

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### Key takeaways

- Five core metrics cover most needs: tons by stream, diversion rate, total spend, cost per ton and year-over-year change.
- Front-load service is billed by volume, not weight, so tonnage often has to be estimated with standard conversion factors.
- Compactor and roll-off scale tickets are the most reliable data you have. Collect them.
- One consistent monthly report across all locations is more useful than occasional detailed studies.

## Why waste data matters now

Waste used to be a facilities expense and nothing more. Today it shows up in sustainability reports, customer questionnaires, lender and investor requests, and corporate goals such as reducing landfill waste. Many reporting frameworks now ask for it. The widely used Global

Reporting Initiative standard, GRI 306: Waste, asks organizations to disclose waste generated and how much is diverted from or sent to disposal.

The problem is that most businesses do not have the data. They have invoices, which describe containers and charges, not tons and outcomes.

## The core metrics

| METRIC | WHAT IT TELLS YOU |
|---|---|
| Tons by stream | How much trash, recycling, organics and regulated waste each location produces. |
| Diversion rate | The share of total waste recycled or composted instead of landfilled. |
| Total spend by category | What you pay for each stream, including fees. |
| Cost per ton | A normalized way to compare locations and spot outliers. |
| Year-over-year change | Whether spend and tonnage are moving in the right direction. |

Depending on your business, it can also help to track waste per location, per square foot or per unit produced, and the number of contamination and overfill charges.

## Filling the gaps in hauler data

**Front-load service is billed by volume.** Haulers usually do not weigh individual front-load containers, so tonnage has to be estimated. The standard method converts container volume to weight using published conversion factors for each material type, such as those published by the U.S. EPA, adjusted for how full the containers actually are.

**Compactors and roll-offs come with scale tickets.** Every haul to a landfill or processor is weighed. These tickets are the most accurate data available, and they also show whether

containers are being hauled before they are full.

**Recyclers and organics processors** can usually provide weight reports, though formats vary. Ask for them as a condition of service.

**Consistency beats precision.** Choose one method for each type of service, document it, and apply it the same way every month. A consistent estimate shows trends reliably; an inconsistent one does not.

## What a useful report looks like

A good monthly report fits on one page and covers every location. The sample below shows a year-to-date summary for a three-site business.

| LOCATION | TRASH (TONS) | RECYCLING (TONS) | ORGANICS (TONS) | DIVERSION | SPEND |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Store A | 42.0 | 18.5 | 6.2 | 37.0% | $14,820 |
| Store B | 38.4 | 9.1 | 0.0 | 19.2% | $11,940 |
| Distribution center | 120.6 | 64.3 | 0.0 | 34.8% | $28,410 |
| **Total** | **201.0** | **91.9** | **6.2** | **32.8%** | **$55,170** |

*Sample data for illustration only.*

Even this small report raises useful questions. Store B diverts half as much as Store A and has the highest cost per ton. That points to a recycling or right-sizing opportunity worth investigating.

## Getting started

1. **Set a baseline** using the last 12 months of invoices and scale tickets.
2. **Agree on methods** for estimating front-load tonnage and document them.
3. **Require weight reporting** from every hauler, recycler and processor.

4. **Report monthly** by location and stream in the same format every time.
5. **Set targets** for diversion and cost per ton once you have a baseline.

## How Keystone helps

Keystone provides the custom reports you need, including landfill diversion, compactor and roll-off weight analysis, waste spend by category and year-over-year waste expenditure. Because every invoice already comes through Keystone, the data is collected in one place. If the metric can be captured, we can report it back to you.

### Get your free savings analysis

Send us your most recent waste invoice for all locations. We will compare your pricing with similar Keystone clients and review our findings with you within 48–72 hours.

Rob Moore, VP of Sales and Consulting · 412-722-8800 · r.moore@KeystoneES.com · www.KeystoneES.com