

Working Material 2.9

Waste as a Managed Resource, Not a Problem

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This sheet puts the working parts of subchapter 2.9 into editable form: the Verification Pact, the review questions, the common mistakes as a self-check and the Operative Synthesis as an action plan. The empty columns are for your property. The reasoning behind each row is in the book.

GUIDING QUESTION

A waste management plan describes what an organisation intended to do the day it was written. A waste habit is what actually happens eighteen months later, after a dozen small, reasonable, never-documented changes. How far apart have the two drifted without anyone noticing?

Verification Pact: Market Claims Against the Standard

The first three columns are copied from the book. In the last one, note whether this claim circulates in your property — in a proposal, a brochure, a supplier's pitch or your own documents — and what you now hold instead.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A waste management plan, once thoroughly developed and documented, remains valid until deliberately revised	No	Clause 6.1.2 requires ongoing consideration of changes to activities, products, and services; a plan is subject to this requirement continuously, not only at its own initial drafting	
A new retail concept, catering arrangement, or renovation is a commercial or operational decision unrelated to the environmental management system	No	Any change affecting a significant environmental aspect, including waste composition or volume, falls within the ongoing review clause 6.1.2 requires, regardless of which function initiated the change	
A reported performance figure remains accurate as long as the underlying plan it was calculated from has not been formally revised	No	Reported figures should reflect verified current practice, not an extrapolation from an increasingly outdated baseline the organisation has not recently checked	
A temporary operational accommodation, once its triggering circumstance ends, automatically reverts to prior practice	No	The Copenhagen case demonstrates directly that a temporary accommodation can persist as an informal habit well beyond its original justification, absent any deliberate step confirming reversion	
A well-designed original plan requires less ongoing verification than a poorly designed one	No	Quality of original design has no bearing on whether an operation has continued to change since — a well-designed plan can become just as outdated as a poorly designed one if neither receives ongoing review	

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
Verifying downstream contractor processing, as this volume's earlier chapter recommended, is sufficient to ensure waste management system integrity	No	Downstream verification and on-site plan currency are distinct requirements; excelling at one provides no assurance regarding the other, as Copenhagen's case demonstrates precisely	

A Checklist for the Next Waste Review

Answer each question with Yes, Partly, No or N.A., and name the evidence: a record, a date, a person, a place someone can go and look. An answer without evidence is an opinion.

Question	Why it matters	Answer	Evidence
When was our current waste management plan last checked directly against actual bin contents, not assumed accurate?	The single question that would have caught Copenhagen's 18-month drift earlier		
Have any new retail concepts, outsourced arrangements, or renovations occurred since the plan was last reviewed?	Each of these, at Copenhagen, introduced an unaddressed gap independently		
Does any temporary accommodation currently in place have a dated confirmation that it will revert, or has it simply persisted by default?	An unconfirmed temporary measure is, functionally, a permanent undocumented change		
Is our reported diversion or performance figure recalculated periodically against physical evidence, or extrapolated indefinitely from an original baseline?	Extrapolation without verification is exactly what let Copenhagen's figure drift silently from reality		
Do new staff learn the current written plan, or whatever practice a departing colleague happened to demonstrate?	Informal practice propagates through onboarding exactly as it did across Copenhagen's kitchen team		

Common Mistakes — Self-Check

Tick every mistake you recognise in your own property today, and write next to it where you saw it. A ticked box is not a nonconformity; it is a place to look before an auditor or an incident does.

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Treating a well-designed waste management plan as permanently adequate once launched.	
☐	Managing operational changes — new concepts, arrangements, renovations — without connecting them back to waste plan review.	
☐	Allowing a temporary accommodation to persist as an unexamined permanent habit once its triggering circumstance ends.	
☐	Reporting a performance figure extrapolated from an aging baseline rather than recalculated against verified current practice.	
☐	Assuming a plan's original thoroughness reduces the need for ongoing verification.	

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Responding to a discovered gap by revising the reported figure alone, without conducting a physical composition audit or addressing the underlying drift.	
☐	Failing to train new staff against the current written plan, allowing informal practice to propagate through onboarding.	
☐	Treating downstream contractor verification as sufficient assurance for the entire waste management system, without separately verifying on-site practice.	
☐	Conducting physical waste audits only in response to a specific concern, rather than on a standing periodic schedule.	
☐	Assuming staff will independently connect an operational change to its waste management implications without an explicit organisational trigger requiring the connection.	

Operative Synthesis — Action Plan

The three horizons and their actions are copied from the book. Owner and due date are yours to fill: an action without both is a wish.

Horizon	Action from the book	Owner	Due date
Act on immediately	Conduct a physical waste composition check across at least the property's highest-volume departments, comparing actual bin contents directly against what the current written plan specifies, and note every discrepancy honestly rather than assuming the plan still describes reality.		
Plan for	Connect any new retail concept, outsourced arrangement, or facility disruption to a standing waste management review trigger within the property's own change approval process; and require explicit, dated reversion confirmation for any temporary waste handling accommodation.		
Monitor going forward	Schedule a physical waste composition audit at least twice yearly, independent of whether any specific change has occurred, and recalculate reported diversion figures against that audit's findings rather than an ageing original baseline.		

WHAT THIS SHEET IS NOT

ISO 14001 does not prescribe this form. No clause asks for this worksheet, its columns or a register of market claims; the standard sets requirements and leaves the means to the organisation. This sheet is a working aid drawn from the book: use it, change it or set it aside. Where it touches a requirement, the text of ISO 14001:2026 is the authority, not this page — and nothing on it replaces your own reading of that text.

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