

# Operational Waste Minimisation and Management Guidance Note [2013]

This note documents Massmart's position on operational and post-consumer waste minimisation.

*Please note that it does not replace relevant National and Municipal waste management and disposal standards and assumes full compliance with these regulations.*

## **Background**

At a global level, the depletion of natural resources and space limitations arising from urbanisation and population growth have highlighted the need for more socially and environmentally responsible waste management practices.

Waste management and disposal is particularly problematic in developing markets where investment in waste management infrastructure is often outpaced by population growth and resource use. South Africa currently faces a shortage of suitable landfill sites and of the 1 280 landfill sites (general and hazardous) currently in operation only 44% are authorised through permitted (CSIR 2009).

In response to the need for better waste management practices, the South African Government has through the 2001 Polokwane Waste Declaration on Waste Management and the National Environmental Management: Waste Act of 2008 (NEMWA) made waste management a priority for all South Africans. The NEMWA along with section 59 of the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) places responsibilities on waste producers to reduce, re-use, recycle and recover waste and to dispose of waste in an environmentally sound manner. Fundamental to this approach is the concept that the disposal of waste to landfill should be minimised.

Over and above the pressure that South Africa's landfills are under, unnecessary food wastage represents a significant problem commonly associated with the retail sector. Preventable food waste is of particular concern in emerging markets where many people remain vulnerable to food insecurity. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) indicates that approximately one third of all food intended for human consumption is lost or wasted each year (2011).

Given the social and environmental issues associated with increased waste generation, inadequate waste disposal infrastructure and the responsibilities imposed on waste producers by the NEMWA and the CPA, it is essential for retailers to play an active role in minimising the volume of waste produced by their operations, suppliers and customers.

## **Walmart Position**

Operational Waste minimisation is an important Walmart sustainability goal, and the company aims to be packaging neutral globally and to eliminate landfill waste in its operations in the United States by 2025.

To achieve its zero waste to landfill goal, Walmart is focused on three areas of waste diversion:

1. **Recycling** cardboard, paper, aluminium, plastic bags and approximately 30 other items through the Super Sandwich Bale (SSB) program.
2. **Donating** healthy, nutritious food to food banks around the country.
3. **Creating** animal feed, energy or compost from expired food and other organic products, following the US EPA's food waste hierarchy.

## Massmart Position

Massmart produces modest volumes of operational waste, including paper, board, and plastic recyclables and food that has passed its in-store shelf life. In addition many of its customers expect that it will provide a service that will assist them to responsibly dispose of various electronic products such as computers, monitors and appliances at end of life.

As a responsible retailer, Massmart is intent on implementing waste minimisation initiatives that optimise re-cycling and re-use of store-generated waste and high priority consumer waste.

Massmart will reduce waste to landfill and assist its suppliers and customers to do the same. This will be achieved through the implementation of store-based operational waste recycling, optional post-consumer e-waste/glass/tin recycling, optional food donations and supplier secondary packaging reuse initiatives.

## Action

Massmart will institute the following mandatory measures to minimise and monitor waste to landfill:

- All Massmart divisions will implement initiatives to separate, collect and recycle paper, board and plastic waste generated at stores;
- All store waste service providers will be registered in compliance with all relevant national and municipal regulations; and obtain waste disposal certificates which must be made available in store for scrutiny;
- To facilitate ongoing monitoring of waste minimisation progress, stores will complete a Massmart formulated waste disposal self-assessment annually.

Stores can at their discretion, with divisional approval, also take the following measures:

- Implement cost neutral post-consumer e-waste/glass/tin take-back initiatives;
- Donate, in agreement with suppliers/food buyers, food that has reached the end of its in-store shelf life to FoodBank South Africa or similar Massmart authorised food redistribution charities (**to the extent that it is in compliance with all regulations pertaining to food donations and does not expose the business to additional risk**);
- Assist with the implementation of supplier initiatives that involve the return and reuse of secondary packaging such as transportation packaging and outers.