8 Types of Waste

**Purpose:** To help unit-based teams define, identify and eliminate waste in a process. This tool is a good introduction to performance improvement.

**When:** To help your team determine where to focus improvement efforts

**Who:** Level 2 team and higher

- **TALENT**
  - Failing to engage people’s skills and knowledge

- **INVENTORY**
  - Expired, excess or inadequate supplies

- **OVERPROCESSING**
  - Doing more than what’s required

- **VARIATION**
  - Lack of standardization

- **MOTION**
  - Excessive movement

- **DEFECTS/REWORK**
  - Time spent inspecting/fixing errors

- **WAITING**
  - Delays in service, care, workflow

- **SEARCHING**
  - Trying to locate a particular piece of mail or an email

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8 Types of Waste: Examples and Worksheet

Use this worksheet to define, identify and eliminate waste in your workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of waste</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Clinical examples</th>
<th>Business and operations examples</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TALENT</td>
<td>Failing to engage people's skills and knowledge</td>
<td>Underusing a person's skills, talent and creativity; confusion about roles and responsibilities; or failing to capture ideas from all employees connected to the work</td>
<td>Employees lack the tools needed to perform and continuously improve their assigned work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVENTORY</td>
<td>Expired, excess or inadequate supplies</td>
<td>Having wrong, expired, excess or inadequate supplies and equipment</td>
<td>Over-or under stocked medications on units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTION</td>
<td>Excessive movement</td>
<td>Excessive movement of materials, patients/members or employees</td>
<td>Staff must travel to a remote storage room or out-of-the-way cabinet or cart to retrieve supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAITING</td>
<td>Delays in service, care, workflow</td>
<td>Time spent waiting for people, information or equipment; waiting for the next step in a process</td>
<td>Patients waiting for lab results or waiting to see provider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEARCHING</td>
<td>Seeking misplaced materials, information, equipment or hard-to-find people</td>
<td>Time and energy spent looking for misplaced or misfiled materials, information, equipment or people</td>
<td>Searching for ultrasound machine that was not returned to the central storage area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFECTS/REWORK</td>
<td>Time spent inspecting/fixing errors</td>
<td>Products, services or processes that do not meet expectations or needs; defects passed along the process can amplify the impact of the initial defect</td>
<td>Failure to reconcile medications results in a medication error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIATION</td>
<td>Lack of standardization</td>
<td>Lacking a consistent way of performing work that should be standardized; processes that lead to inconsistent or unpredictable results</td>
<td>Patients receive different treatments for the same or similar illness or condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERPROCESSING</td>
<td>Doing more than what's required</td>
<td>Doing more than what is needed or expected in a process; unnecessary steps or operations that are accepted as necessary</td>
<td>Multiple people ordering labs, medications etc. for a patient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>