

Depot hand Job Description

A free job description template for the Waste management industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This depot hand job description template reflects Australian workplace standards and waste industry practice at the time of publication. It is a general guide only and does not constitute legal advice. Confirm the applicable classification, licence requirements and pay rate against the Waste Management Award 2020 (MA000043) and the actual duties of the role before advertising. For complex coverage questions, seek independent legal or HR advice.

1. Position overview

A depot hand keeps the yard working so the trucks can. The role covers bin delivery, exchange and repair, washing down vehicles and plant, moving materials around the yard, and general labouring wherever the depot needs it that day.

It is the common entry point into waste operations. Under the Waste Management Award a depot hand sits at Level 2, above the Level 1 trainee classification, and many depot hands progress to a collection driver role once they hold a heavy vehicle licence.

2. Key responsibilities

Deliver, exchange and retrieve bins

Drop new bins to residential and commercial customers, swap damaged units and retrieve bins at the end of a service.

Repair and refurbish bins

Replace lids, wheels, axles and pins so serviceable bins go back into the fleet rather than to landfill.

Wash down vehicles and plant

Clean collection vehicles and equipment at the end of the run in line with the depot wash-bay procedure.

Keep the yard clean and safe

Sweep, clear spills, keep access ways free and segregate materials so plant can move without obstruction.

Assist collection crews

Work as an offsider on rear-loader runs where the crew configuration requires it.

Support stock and consumables

Receive deliveries, keep PPE and consumables stocked, and flag shortages before they stop a run.

3. Skills and attributes

- Physical fitness: Comfortable with repetitive lifting, bending and time on their feet across a full shift.
- Reliability: Turns up for early starts and completes yard tasks without needing to be chased.
- Safety awareness: Understands how to work around reversing trucks and operating plant.
- Practical hand skills: Can repair a bin, change a wheel and use basic hand tools competently.
- Teamwork: Works alongside drivers and supervisors and communicates clearly across a noisy yard.
- Pace: Keeps the yard moving so trucks are not held up at the start or end of a run.

4. Qualifications and requirements

Requirements for depot hand positions vary by operator and vehicle class. These are the credentials Australian waste employers ask for most often.

- No formal qualification required — Not required. Depot hand is an entry-level classification and most training is provided on the job.
- Manual handling training — Provided. Delivered at induction and refreshed periodically.
- Class C driver licence — Commonly required. Needed for bin delivery runs in a light vehicle.
- Forklift licence (LF) — Desirable. Useful at depots that move palletised materials or bulk consumables.
- Certificate II in Waste Management — Desirable. Supports progression into driving or plant operating roles.
- White Card — Situational. Required where the depot hand attends construction sites for bin delivery or exchange.

5. Working conditions

- Outdoor yard work in all weather
- Early starts aligned to the collection fleet
- Physically demanding with repetitive manual handling
- Exposure to odour, dust and noise, with PPE provided
- Work around moving heavy vehicles and plant
- Occasional weekend work at busy depots

6. Award information

Waste Management Award 2020 (MA000043)

Most depot hand positions in Australia are covered by the Waste Management Award 2020 (MA000043). This role generally sits at Level 2, which pays \$1,168.48 a week or \$30.75 an hour for full-time and part-time employees, and \$38.44 an hour for casuals, from 1 July 2026. See the full Waste Management Award pay guide for every classification, penalty rate and allowance.

The rates include the industry allowance

Fair Work publishes these rates with the \$3.24 per hour industry allowance already included, because clause 16.2(b) makes it an all-purpose allowance — payable for all purposes including overtime and shift rates. Rate sites that strip it out quote a Level 1 rate around \$26.63 instead of \$30.11, and every penalty calculated from that lower base is understated.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a depot hand do in waste management?

A depot hand handles the yard-side work that keeps a collection fleet running: delivering, exchanging and repairing bins, washing down vehicles, keeping the yard clear, and assisting collection crews as an offsider where needed.

Q: Do you need a licence to be a depot hand?

No heavy vehicle licence is required. A Class C car licence is commonly needed for bin delivery runs, and a forklift licence is useful at larger depots, but the role is an entry point and training is provided.

Q: What award level is a depot hand?

Level 2 under the Waste Management Award, above the Level 1 trainee classification. Level 2 covers labourers, depot hands, waste facility attendants, process workers and driver offsidars.

Q: Can a depot hand become a collection driver?

Commonly, yes. It is the usual progression path — a depot hand who obtains a Heavy Rigid licence can move into a Level 5 collection driver role, which carries a higher award rate.

Pay and award

Q: How much does a depot hand earn in Australia?

Under the Waste Management Award 2020, a depot hand at Level 2 earns a minimum of \$1,168.48 a week or \$30.75 an hour as a full-time or part-time employee, and \$38.44 an hour as a casual, from 1 July 2026. These are legal minimums — many operators pay above them, and penalties apply for weekend, shift and overtime work.

Q: Do early starts attract a penalty rate?

Not inside the ordinary-hours span. The award opens ordinary hours at 4.00am, so a pre-dawn start is ordinary time at 100%. Paying a penalty for every early start is the most common overpayment in waste payroll. See the award guide for the full span.

Q: What are the weekend and public holiday rates?

Saturday is 150% for the first two hours then 200%, Sunday is 200%, and a public holiday is 250% — with Good Friday and Christmas Day higher again at 300%. Casual rates add 25 percentage points to each, except overtime, which adds 10.

Q: What is the minimum shift length?

Four hours. Casual employees have a minimum daily engagement of 4 hours and part-time employees must be paid a minimum of 4 hours for each day worked.

Hiring and rostering

Q: How do I write a depot hand job ad?

Start from this template, then add the specific vehicle class, site and start time. Candidates for waste roles self-select strongly on start time and equipment, so being vague costs you good applicants. Our guide to writing a job description covers the structure.

Q: How do I keep licences current across a crew?

Store each licence and endorsement against the employee with its expiry date and get warned in advance — see licence and certification management. Rostering someone onto a task they are no longer certified for is the employer's exposure.

Q: How do I roster around early starts fairly?

Publish rosters with enough notice, rotate the earliest starts across the crew, and track actual versus rostered hours so the load is visible. Our guide to rostering waste collection staff walks through it.

Q: Can RosterElf track depot clock-ins?

Yes. GPS geofences around each depot or transfer station record where and when a shift actually started against what was rostered — the comparison an early-start or overtime question turns on months later.