



Mine site reusable crib kits Implementation tips

Waste avoidance: Reducing single-use plastics on mine sites

Reusable containers and crib kits are effectively used on mine sites and in accommodation villages in Western Australia (WA). On some sites, crib kits and bring-your-own food containers have been the standard for decades.

Crib kits can be easily implemented in these closed-loop environments. Reusable containers reduce reliance on single-use packaging, whether plastic or paper-based. It also prevents large volumes of disposable containers being sent to landfill. This is a positive outcome for the environment, sustainability goals and ESG targets.

Reusable crib kits can also cut costs by eliminating recurring expenditure on items that are only used once.



Courtesy BCI Minerals

The costs of disposable food containers and cups add up across three meals a day. This cost is passed on by caterers to mining companies or contractors, built into quotes and invoices. A basic but functional crib kit with an insulated crib bag, three containers and cutlery set can be purchased for less than \$50. Costs can reduce by about 20 per cent when greater quantities are purchased.

Examples from WA mine sites show the cost of reusable crib kits can be recovered in three to eight months due to the savings on no-longer-needed disposable containers. Savings of tens of thousands of dollars per month can be made – even higher when the reduction in waste management and landfill costs is factored in. Over time, this is a significant business saving, an environmental win and a move towards a circular economy. Consider the [break-even point for reusable crib kits](#) at your mine site with a simple [calculator](#).

Reusable crib kits (lunchboxes, coffee mugs, water bottles, bags) can last for many years before needing to be replaced. Companies can also sell crib kits to personnel or ask them to bring their own. Both options result in savings.

Crib kit options

Resource companies can decide which option suits their operational, budget and workforce needs depending on whether they manage their own facilities and catering or if this is done by an external company.

The cheapest and easiest way to implement reusable containers on mine sites is for people to bring their own. The other way is the mining company buys and supplies a basic crib kit. Many mining companies do not charge people for their first crib kit. This is entirely a business decision for individual companies to make.

Having replacement crib kits available to purchase on site is recommended. This is also helpful for contractors or infrequent site visitors.

Reusable crib kit models:

1. Personnel purchase and bring their own crib kit
2. Mining company purchases and supplies initial crib kit
3. Combination crib kits – personally brought and company supplied

The contents of a crib kit can vary from a basic kit (lunchbox container, cutlery and water bottle in an insulated bag) to more comprehensive kits (multiple containers, cutlery, insulated water bottle, insulated coffee cup, ice brick and insulated bag). Kit costs can depend on what's included, the materials, how many kits are ordered, the supplier and if they are branded with a company logo.

Purchase and bring your own (BYO) crib kit

BYO crib kits place the onus on people to buy and remember their crib kit which can include multiple food containers of the same or different sizes, cutlery, coffee keep cups, refillable water bottles and ice bricks stored in an insulated crib bag.

Mining (or catering) company buys and supplies initial crib kit

Crib kits can be basic or comprehensive, branded or unbranded, sourced from one or multiple suppliers and all these factors affect the purchasing cost. Some suppliers offer a large range of kits, where every component is available from one supplier and can be tailored to needs. A kit that includes high-quality components will have a longer lifespan and will need to be replaced less often. People tend to take better care of their crib kits if they are higher quality. Durability is also important on mine sites. Just as with BYO, people are responsible for remembering to bring company-supplied crib kits. They are also responsible for buying replacements for items that are lost or damaged.

Combination crib kits - BYO and company supplied

BYO is also common on mine sites where companies supply crib kits. This can be due to personal preferences about container materials and sizes. It can also be due to companies only supplying crib kits to new starters who are permanent personnel, not contractors or visitors. The most common BYO items are refillable water bottles and coffee cups, which are less often included in company-supplied crib kits. However, including these items in a more comprehensive high-quality kit has the benefit of people taking better care of it.

Companies looking to reduce costs might also take the option of supplying just crib containers and cutlery, leaving people to supply their own crib bag and extra items such as water bottle and coffee cup. More information about materials making up crib kits along with advantages and disadvantages is available in the Mine site reusable crib kits **choices and tips** fact sheet.

Washing stations, sinks and troughs

Whether the kit is BYO or supplied, the users are responsible for washing their containers and ensuring they are clean and ready, as has been successfully implemented on various sites for many years. Site cleaners are **not** tasked with washing crib containers.

Site infrastructure must include ready access to sinks for people to wash their crib kits. Washing stations must offer warm water, soap and brushes or sponges (brushes are preferable). Paper towels and drying racks are optional. Paper towels can be helpful but are also messy. Not offering paper towels avoids paper waste going to landfill.

Sinks are best placed near the dining hall or dry mess and at work areas where crib rooms are present. Five-litre detergent dispensers are recommended to reduce costs and plastic waste generated by smaller bottles. Clear signage about the process is vital. More information on washing stations is available in the Mine site reusable crib kits infrastructure requirements fact sheet.

On single mine sites involving multiple companies or contractors with different operating systems, budgets and ESG goals, the composition, implementation and distribution of reusable crib kits can vary. Crib kit choices will depend on factors including existing supplier contracts, ordering and delivery systems and available storage space. Communication on crib kit use and washing is vital and more information can be found in the Mine site reusable crib kits communication tips fact sheet.



Courtesy BCI Minerals