

**Table 3.1.** Examples of wasteful activities found in service organizations

Wasteful Activity	Examples in Service Organizations
Waiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A patient waits in the lobby of a hospital to be escorted to an exam room.</li> <li>▪ A supervisor waits for her assistant to compile some data, which is required for her to complete a report.</li> </ul>
Convolved pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A contract requires signatures in a sequential order of multiple authorities, all of which are located throughout an organization’s set of buildings, therefore the path followed is not sequential, but up and down/back and forth throughout the office grounds.</li> <li>▪ An agency receives an application for service that is incomplete, requiring it to be sent back to the applicant to complete and resubmit .</li> </ul>
Rework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The data/information about the mailing address of a customer must be entered into an order database and then re-entered into a UPS database that is used by the organization for ground shipment because the databases are not linked and certain fields will not auto-populate.</li> <li>▪ An agency uses paper files to hand count the number and type of services it delivers for a quarterly report, because its electronic database to record this information has an error in the way it does the counts.</li> </ul>
Information deficits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An emergency room takes in patients that do not have a list of their medications, which requires the hospital staff to contact others to determine this information.</li> <li>▪ An application form does not have complete and clear instructions about filling out the form, which results in many applications being received that are filled out incorrectly.</li> </ul>
Errors/defects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An agency prints off 10,000 copies of a promotional flyer, only to find out later that there was an error on a critical date on the brochure, requiring it to be reprinted.</li> <li>▪ A hospital pharmacy fills a prescription for a patient but gives the wrong dosage, resulting in the patient’s death.</li> </ul>
Inefficient work stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An agency has a central filing room where all staff must go to retrieve a client’s file to work on.</li> <li>▪ A room set up to assemble a set of educational materials (e.g., books, CDs, flyers, and a tip sheet) into a box for mailing does not have materials in the correct order to placing in the box.</li> </ul>
Extra processing steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A staff person completing an assignment for his/her supervisor keeps putting off completing it, then has to go back to the supervisor to clarify what needs to be done.</li> <li>▪ An auditor for an organization that has a government contract reviews all of that organization’s sub-contractor files to assure accuracy in documentation, rather than a representative sample of these contract files.</li> </ul>
Stockpiled materials and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An organization buys bulk supplies and other material at the end of a fiscal year because the money has to be spent, not out of need.</li> <li>▪ A final report is produced in 25 copies, although only 10 are needed for distribution, requiring the remaining copies to be stored.</li> </ul>
Excess services and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An organization has a standard package of services it offers to its clients who are looking for work, even though at least half of the clients do not need the entire package.</li> <li>▪ A hospital has the practice of ordering specialty consults for a patient who does not need that consult.</li> </ul>
Process variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An organization’s database has many open-ended fields that are completed by the data entry person, where the same items may be entered in different ways (e.g., person’s name—some do first name, last name, others do last name, first name).</li> <li>▪ Four staff within an agency review applications to determine eligibility for a service and one person has a set of criteria that are not as stringent as the other staff.</li> </ul>
Resource depletion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An organization’s staff spend a considerable amount of time dealing with clients who are not eligible for a service (e.g., going through a denial process and handling grievances), thereby limiting the time they have to address the needs of eligible clients.</li> <li>▪ A county government has only enough funds to cover the salary of 85% of its workforce, requiring the staff to go on unpaid leave for 1 day of each week, reducing the amount of time staff have to complete the work at hand.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Miller, J., Bogatova, T., and Carnohan, B. (2011). *Improving Performance in Service Organizations: How to Implement a Lean Transformation*, p. 45. Chicago, IL.: Lyceum Books, Inc.