

The building environment you work in

Construction generates 3 tonnes of waste for every person in the country and produces 24% of all waste arising - 13 million tonnes are unused building products.

The value of a skip - labour, skip cost and materials - is over £1,400.

Labourer

ENVIRONMENTAL INFO SHEET



Construction waste - the key facts

Waste is 'any substance or object that the holder discards, or intends to discard'.

You have a **Duty of Care** to know what is in your waste, that the person you are giving it to is licensed to carry it and that it is disposed of in a licensed site.

- **SUB-CONTRACTORS** - who give waste to a main contractor, are still responsible for those wastes under the Duty of Care.
- **MOVING WASTE** - if you transport your own waste, you need to be registered as a waste carrier with your Environmental Regulator.
- **HAZARDOUS WASTE** - most building sites need to be registered if they produce hazardous waste.

Types of waste

There are three main types of construction waste distinguished by their environmental impact. Each is sent to a different type of landfill site.

Inert waste - includes set concrete, bricks, asphalt, glass, tiles, slate, sand, gravel, sub-soil (but not topsoil).

Non-hazardous waste - includes timber, packaging, insulation, topsoil, plastic, wet cement, empty tins and tubes, metal, food, lead piping, carpets, tanalised timber.

Plasterboard waste has disposal problems because when mixed with other biodegradable wastes (like food) it can produce hydrogen sulphide, a major part of acid rain. If no more than 10% of a load, it can be mixed with other wastes. At greater levels, it needs to be segregated and either recycled or sent to landfill mono cells that do not take biodegradable wastes.

Hazardous waste - includes solvent-based paint, solvent-based cement additives, resins, coaltar products (eg some roofing felts), batteries, solvent-based mastics and glues, fluorescent tubes, asbestos, fridges, TV monitors, oil, petrol, diesel, many forms of preservative-treated timber (eg creosote), waste containing polychlorinated biphenyl (eg resin-based flooring, sealants, sealed glazing units), contaminated soil (eg arsenic, cadmium, lead, nickel).



Things you can do

We are all aiming for the best practical environmental option - a balance between getting the job done well and considering the environmental impact. Using the best environmental option can also save you money.

You should:

- Know about the products you are handling - read the label.
- Know about and recognise different waste types - if you do not know what something is, then ask.
- Get the trades to finish mixed materials - cement, plaster, and adhesives.
- Never throw away insulation - it reduces the energy a building needs and helps prevent global warming.
- Send back pallets - they can be re-used and should never be wasted in a skip.
- Segregate - if you have space, do not mix non-hazardous and inert waste.
- Pack skips well - a skip is up to 70% air.
- Aim to reduce packaging waste - at the end of a job, up to 35% of waste is packaging.
- Use dumpy bags to segregate waste - they cannot be re-used.
- Damp down dust with water when you are sweeping up - it helps the local environment.

- Know if your site produces hazardous waste and is registered.

- Know how to fill in a waste transfer note.

Coming your way soon

The law on environmental issues is constantly changing. Some initiatives you should know about are:

WEEE - Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations affect all forms of electrical equipment, from mobile phones to battery power tools. These will be classified as hazardous waste and need to be deconstructed before disposal.

Batteries Directive - on the use and disposal of batteries.

Part L of the Building Regulations will set new standards for the conservation of heat and power in buildings.

Site waste management plans - do you have one?

Landfill Directive regulates the types of waste that can be sent to landfill and sets pretreatment targets.

Like to know some more?

The **waste hierarchy** defines a number of methods of waste disposal from least to most harmful to the environment. The order is **reduce, re-use, recycle, landfill**.

Landfill tax is paid to HM Revenue and Customs for each tonne of waste sent to landfill. The rate is reviewed

annually. Inert waste has stayed at £2.00 per tonne. Non-hazardous waste is £21.00 per tonne and will rise to a target of £35.00 per tonne.

European waste codes (EWC) are standard codes for all types of waste based on their source. In construction, they begin with 17. Examples are 17 01 01 concrete and 17 02 01 wood. If a code has an asterisk against it, this refers to the hazardous nature of the waste.

Waste transfer notes are a form that should be filled in and accompany any load of waste leaving site (listing the EWC).

Want some help?

Website lists sources of recycled building products:

www.recycledproducts.org.uk

Type in your postcode and the website will detail local waste handling, recycling and re-use companies and organisations:

www.bremap.co.uk/bremap/search.jsp

Colour-coded skips:

www.wascot.org.uk/construction/colour.asp

Details on recycling:

www.wrap.org.uk

Legal obligations with respect to waste management:

www.netregs.gov.uk

Hazardous waste:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

www.envirowise.gov.uk/construction



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Envirowise - Practical Environmental Advice for Business - is a Government programme that offers free, independent and practical advice to UK businesses to reduce waste at source and increase profits. It is managed by Momenta, an operating division of AEA Technology plc, and Serco TTI.



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