

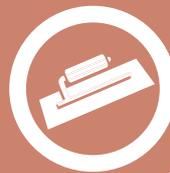
## The building environment you work in

The UK uses 200 million m<sup>2</sup> of plasterboard and 60 million bags of plaster each year. Annual sales have a value of £600 million - 60% is used for house building and commercial work, 40% for repair, maintenance and improvement.

Up to 1.3 million tonnes of plasterboard waste is generated within the construction and refurbishment industry each year, and a proportion of all new plasterboard is wasted before even being used.

# Plasterer

## ENVIRONMENTAL INFO SHEET



### Construction waste - some 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.
- **CHECK** - that the person collecting it is licensed to do so.
- **PROVE** - that it is disposed of in a licensed site.

#### Hazardous Waste Regulations

require producers of hazardous waste to register their premises, which includes most building sites. A **Material Safety Data Sheet** must accompany any material supplied to you that has potentially hazardous properties.

A **waste carrier's licence** must be held by anyone who transports waste.

**Waste transfer notes** should be filled in and accompany any load of waste leaving site (listing the European Waste Catalogue (EWC) code).

**Segregating waste** helps to improve its management. There are standard colour-coded signs for waste

containers: Gypsum - white, Inert - grey, Mixed - black, Wood - green, Hazardous - orange, Metal - blue, Packaging - brown.

The **waste hierarchy** defines methods of waste disposal according to their environmental impact. The order is **reduce, re-use, recycle, landfill**. You should always be trying to move your disposal solution up the scale.

**Landfill tax** is paid to HM Revenue and Customs for each tonne of waste sent to landfill. The rate is reviewed annually and is currently £2.50 per tonne for inert waste and £32.00 per tonne for non-hazardous waste.

**Landfill Directive** - all waste going to landfill must now be treated to change the characteristics of the waste to reduce its volume, or reduce its hazardous nature, or facilitate its handling, or enhance its recovery.

**EWC codes** are standard for all types of waste. Examples are 17 04 01 copper, bronze, brass; 17 08 gypsum-based construction material; 17 04 10\* cables containing oil, coal tar and other dangerous substances. The \* refers to the hazardous nature of the waste.

### Site waste management plans

(England only) - to improve construction waste management and are mandatory for projects with a value over £300,000.

### Types of waste

The wastes you produce are categorised for disposal according to their environmental impact.

**Inert waste** - includes bricks, blocks, set concrete and mortar, asphalt, glass, ceramics and tiles, slate, sand, gravel.

**Non-hazardous waste** - includes timber, paper, plastic, packaging, empty tins and tubes, PVA, topsoil, insulation, metal, steel, food, carpets, ironmongery, lath and plaster, water-based glues, paints and mastics.

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.

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**Hazardous waste** - includes solvent-based mastics and glues, paints, varnishes, sealants, wood stains and wood preservers, additives and waterproofing products, spray paints, coal tar products (eg some roofing felts), batteries, fluorescent tubes, asbestos, oil, petrol, diesel, waste containing PCBs (eg resin-based flooring, sealants, sealed glazing units).

## Things you can do

**You have many priorities at work and health and safety are first. We are all aiming for the BPEO - 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.**

- With the problems of disposal of plaster wastes see how you can reduce or eliminate waste by actively encouraging better design and good site practice, such as re-using offcuts.
- Don't waste materials. Use what you have on site and what you have mixed. Work out your own way to use offcuts.
- Store materials carefully so they are not wasted by damage from impact or moisture.
- Redoing work is very wasteful. Protect work so others do not damage it.
- Segregate your waste so you do not contaminate other wastes.
- Make sure plaster washings do not contaminate ground water.

- Find out how much recycled content there is in the materials you use and try those with higher recycled content.
- Consider using lime-based products.

## Coming your way soon

The **Waste Strategy for England** aims to halve construction and demolition waste to landfill by 2012 and raise landfill tax to £48.00 per tonne by 2010.

**Batteries Directive** - to reduce the environmental impact of battery disposal.

**Soil Framework Directive** - to establish common principles for the protection and sustainable use of soils.

**Draft Climate Change Bill** - aims to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> at 1990 figures by 26-32% by 2020, and 60% by 2050.

## Like to know some more?

**Environmental taxes** - in 1996 there were no environmental taxes. In 2006 the Landfill Tax, Aggregates Levy and Climate Change Levy raised over £1.8 billion.

**Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations** - all businesses that use electrical and electronic equipment must store, collect, treat, recycle and dispose of WEEE separately from other waste. This includes power tools, mobile phones, CCTV and alarm systems, computers and microwaves (but not the fabric of the building, such as lifts). Visit [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

**The RoHS Directive** aims to restrict the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic

equipment. It bans placing on the EU market new electrical and electronic equipment containing more than agreed levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants.

## Want some help?

### Waste management

[www.ciwm.co.uk/pm/316](http://www.ciwm.co.uk/pm/316)

### Site waste management plans

[www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/legislation/380525/1555007/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/legislation/380525/1555007/?version=1&lang=_e)

### Hazardous waste

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/1019330/1217981/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste/1019330/1217981/?version=1&lang=_e)

### Legal information

[www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/sectors/1842950/1868459/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/sectors/1842950/1868459/?version=1&lang=_e) - concerning plastering

### Recycling

[www.bremap.co.uk/bremap/search.jsp](http://www.bremap.co.uk/bremap/search.jsp) - type in your postcode and the site details local waste handling, recycling and re-use organisations

### Advice

[www.envirowise.gov.uk/construction](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/construction) - advice and practical support

[www.wrap.org.uk/](http://www.wrap.org.uk/) - information and advice on environmental issues in construction

### Energy

[www.est.org.uk/](http://www.est.org.uk/) - energy saving ideas

[www.carbontrust.co.uk](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk) - calculate your carbon footprint

[www.envirowise.gov.uk/construction](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/construction)

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