

Easy Guide to Waste Reduction – BUILDING PRODUCTS

This guide provides businesses involved in the manufacture, distribution and sale of products to the building industry with top tips for reducing waste during construction and demolition.

Products end up as waste during construction through off-cuts, mistakes, temporary works, poor workmanship, inefficient installation or use or because of damage. During demolition, products become waste when they cannot be salvaged efficiently or cannot be recycled or reused.



11 top tips for waste reduction from building products

Product design and materials selection, manufacturing specifications and methods, packaging and delivery and the instructions on product use and installation contribute to the waste on building sites.

1. Consider providing special manufacturing runs for clients to their specification or design your product range to suit standard sizes of other building products (to reduce the need for resizing on site).
2. Consider incorporating recycled materials in the product. Recycle waste product back into new product or use materials from other waste streams.
3. Consider how to achieve seasonal trends and design innovation while reducing the waste created during building and demolition. Consider product durability or ways to update part of the product rather than the entire product during renovations (i.e. by changing veneers or components rather than replacing the entire product).
4. Limit maintenance requirements – this may reduce the use (and wastage) of other materials in the installation and use of your product.
5. Make your products easy to dismantle for reuse and recycling by using mechanical fixing instead of adhesives, by not blending too many materials together or by minimising finishing requirements while still maintaining quality.
6. Offer a take-back service for surplus materials, off-cuts, scrap and packaging.
7. Rationalise and reduce packaging to use minimal types and amounts of materials (e.g. through light-weighting).
8. Provide packaging that is reusable or recyclable.
9. Provide information with the product describing handling, storage and recycling methods for the product (including off-cuts and damaged goods) and packaging.
10. Make waste reduction a key part of training, after-sales service and product literature for tradespeople. Include how to recycle and reuse the product.
11. Provide a just-in-time delivery service to reduce the chance of damaging materials during storage.

The waste issue

The construction and demolition (C&D) industry is one of the largest waste-producing industries in New Zealand. C&D waste may represent up to 50% of waste to landfills and the majority of waste to cleanfills or C&D dumps in New Zealand (according to the NZ Waste Strategy from the Ministry for the Environment). That's a lot of waste to bury in the ground.

Not only is this a waste of good resources, it is also filling up valuable landfill and cleanfill space and contributing to serious environmental impacts such as air and water pollution.



Benefits of reducing product waste

Reducing waste is not just good for the environment. Benefits to your business include:

- being part of the preferred supply chain for projects that specify REBRI waste reduction procedures
- innovation in product design and manufacture, which can help to attract and retain employees, enhance the company image and encourage repeat business
- developing new products and new uses or installation methods, leading to more interactions between you and clients
- market advantage for products with environmental considerations.

Want more information on what you can do to reduce product waste during construction or demolition? See the REBRI guide *Waste Reduction – Building Products*, available at www.rebri.org.nz.



What is REBRI?

REBRI stands for Resource Efficiency in the Building and Related Industries and started in 1995 as a collaborative effort between Auckland councils and the Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) to undertake research and raise awareness of the issues of waste and the efficient use of resources in C&D projects. A consortium of councils, BRANZ, Recycling Operators of New Zealand and the Ministry for the Environment, with assistance from Winstone Wallboards Limited and industry representatives, extended the initiative in 2003 to undertake more research and develop national waste reduction guidelines.