

Easy Guide to Waste Reduction – CONSTRUCTION

This guide provides builders, building owners and developers top tips for reducing waste during construction.

Most waste from a building project is easily recycled or reused on another project. Diverting waste from the landfill skip could mean savings on disposal costs as well as saving money on buying new materials.



Using two skips to sort recycling and landfill waste at South City Library, Christchurch (Mainzeal).

10 top tips for waste reduction during construction

1. Plan to reduce waste at the start of a project – set goals, identify waste recycling opportunities and target specific wastes you expect from the project. Use the REBRI Waste Management Plan.
2. All staff and subcontractors need to follow the waste management systems. Include waste reduction instructions or standards in your contracts in your induction material and other communications with staff and subcontractors. Make it a regular item on toolbox and project management meetings.
3. Order just-in-time delivery of products to reduce the storage time on site (and the potential for damage). Have accurate cutting lists and quantity surveys to avoid overordering and product wastage.
4. Talk with suppliers about the latest methods for product installation and uses so that you can reduce off-cuts, mistakes and damage that all create waste during construction.
5. Keep waste materials separate for recycling and reuse. Store them in different skips, bins or piles, and use clear signage so that everyone knows what to do.
6. Set up a single waste storage area – many smaller bins over one site encourages people to use the nearest bin (and mix up the various waste types making it harder to recycle).
7. Different waste types occur at different times in the project so plan your waste separation system around this. Concrete, steel and timber waste occurs during foundations and framing; cladding, plasterboard, electrical cable and insulation waste occurs during the next phase; cardboard, plastic wrap, paint tins and other packaging waste occurs during fit-out.
8. Encourage reuse of off-cuts, scraps and so on. Keep them in a handy place until the end of the project.
9. Keep a current list of recycling operators in the site office for easy reference. Use the REBRI Waste Management Plan to list the specific recycling operator's details for the project.
10. Have incentives such as morning tea shouts if waste reduction is achieved on the project.

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 waste during construction



Reducing waste is not just good for the environment. Businesses that reduce waste during construction may also experience the following benefits:

- More efficient use of products = reduced costs of purchasing new materials.
- Improved work efficiencies through a focus on reducing rework, temporary works and mistakes.
- Reduced waste disposal costs.
- A high level of client satisfaction could enhance the company image and encourage repeat business.
- Winning contracts for projects that specify REBRI waste reduction procedures.
- Innovation in product use, which can help to attract and retain employees.

Want more information on how to be efficient with materials and reduce waste during construction? See the REBRI guide *Waste Reduction – Construction*, available at www.rebri.org.nz.



Recycling construction metal, Takapuna (Avoca Construction).

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.