

CONSTRUCTION WASTE REDUCTION



Thurston County Solid Waste

Waste reduction, the combination of waste prevention and recycling efforts, makes good financial sense. In addition to financial advantages, waste prevention benefits the environment, benefits society, and your company establishes itself as a good community citizen, providing immeasurable, lasting rewards.

Construction Waste Reduction

TIPS FROM THURSTON COUNTY SOLID WASTE

Waste reduction begins by understanding what is being purchased, how goods are used, and then is put to use by finding ways to eliminate, reduce, reuse, and recycle materials. A good strategy is to target the largest components in the waste stream, and implement the easy waste reduction steps first. Below are some ideas to help you identify waste reduction opportunities at your business.

WASTE PREVENTION

- Purchase pre-cut materials like foam-core panels and floor trusses to reduce waste.
- Reuse materials such as siding, interior trim, doors, framing wood, hardwood floors, and bath fixtures.
- Design floor plans to make efficient use of whole 4' x 8' panels and standard lumber lengths; design to make efficient use of standard lengths of heating duct material, metal pipes, wiring, siding, and gutters.
- Consider advanced framing techniques which reduce and use materials more efficiently.
- Consult trade publications, builder's associations, and local or state agencies for information on resource efficient building designs and techniques.
- Consider design that allows for disassembly where possible as an alternative to demolishing the structure; easily salvaged building materials can mean future material sales or a valuable source of materials for volunteer organizations.
- Work with designers, contractors, and suppliers with a reputation for resource-efficient design and construction.
- Choose to extend the useful life of a new or existing building. Designing with higher quality, more durable materials extends the life of the structure and allows easier remodeling, preservation, or conversion.

According to the US Green Building Council, 30% of the nation's waste and raw materials use is generated by the built environment.

- Architects and designers can reduce construction waste and conserve resources by using smart design features such as multi-purpose rooms, promoting smaller footprints, and specifying building materials that are resource and energy efficient.
- Contractors can further reduce construction waste by using cutting and advanced framing techniques that generate less waste, and carrying over surplus to the next jobsite or donating it to a charitable organization.

Calculating the Cost of Recycling versus the Cost of Disposal

1. Multiply the time it takes to separate recyclables by your labor rate. This number is your Labor Cost to Separate each ton.
2. Multiply the time taken to haul recyclables by cost to operate vehicle divided by tons moved to reach a Hauling Charges number.
3. Add the first two amounts to the recycling tipping fee. This end number will be the Cost Per Ton Recycled.
4. For Cost of Disposal, figure your Hauling Charges to move each ton of waste to a disposal site plus the tipping fee you pay. Often, the highest costs are in the disposal tipping fees, so whatever you are able to remove from your waste stream, the more money you'll save.

RECYCLING

- Identify which materials you can recycle early in the construction process such as cardboard, metals, pallets/wood, concrete, bricks, drywall, and shingles. Metals such as aluminum and copper are valuable and metal recyclers often pay for these materials. Collect all metals such as pipes, wiring, steel beams, iron bars, and cast iron fixtures for recycling.

BUY RECYCLED

The following are commonly recycled products:

- Attic ventilation
- Carpet and under-cushion
- Cellulose insulation
- Composition board
- Compost
- Concrete

- Door mats
- Dry wall
- Floor Matting
- Foundation vents
- Gutter guards
- Interior wall and ceiling panels
- Landscape timbers
- Paint
- Shingles
- Tiles
- Wall paper
- Wood finish

COMPOSTING

Contact your waste hauler about collection service for food scraps, food-solid paper, and yard debris that can be commercially composted.

OUTREACH

Internal

- Keep employees informed and involved – provide regular updates to employees and management about waste reduction efforts. Everyone likes to hear a good word, and employees need to know that their commitments help achieve program goals. Positive communication and employee recognition (via newsletters, email announcements, recognition events) are critical to long-term success of waste reduction programs.
- Allow people involved with your business a chance to suggest ways to reduce waste. Consider operating a suggestion system that offers recognition for good waste reduction ideas.
- Have an annual employee training workshop to keep employees informed about reuse and recycling policies and procedures.
- Train new employees. Let them know they are expected to use resources carefully and to fully participate in waste reduction programs. Explain how to prevent waste and how to recycle materials.

External

- Let the public know about your waste reduction efforts. Send news releases about your efforts to local papers, and trade and environmental publications.
- Join the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WasteWise program. The WasteWise program is a free program open to businesses, schools, local governments, and non-profit organizations of all sizes and from all industry sectors. WasteWise helps to meet goals to reduce and recycle municipal solid waste and selected industrial wastes. By participating in WasteWise your business can:
 - Reduce purchasing and disposal costs.
 - Access a toll-free helpline for technical assistance.
 - Receive an Annual Climate Profile describing greenhouse gas reduction.
 - Obtain public recognition in WasteWise publications, case studies, and meetings.
 - Network in member and regional forums.
 - Receive WasteWise Awards that recognize outstanding achievements.
 - Acquire outreach and educational materials.

For more waste reduction ideas and assistance visit the “Business Waste Reduction” link of www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org or call (360) 867-2491.