

Recovering Construction and Demolition Materials

This information is part of a series of tip sheets created by Booz Allen Hamilton to encourage employee volunteers to incorporate sustainable practices and materials into their Rebuilding Together projects.

Sustainable reuse includes efforts to reduce the environmental impact by reusing and recycling materials generated by building construction, demolition, or renovation. Typical construction and demolition materials include wood, drywall, cardboard, brick, concrete, metal, insulation, and glass.

Information in this tip sheet was derived from the EPA brochure entitled “Recover Your Resources. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle Construction and Demolition Materials at Land Revitalization Projects.” Additional tips can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/tools/cdbrochure.pdf>.

Wood

- Reuse timbers, large dimension lumber, plywood, flooring, molding, lumber longer than 6 feet
- Clean, untreated wood can be recycled, re-milled into flooring, or chipped/ground to make engineered board, boiler fuel, and mulch

Gypsum Wallboard

- Remove and recycle gypsum wallboard. Markets include new drywall manufacture, cement manufacture, and agriculture
- Unused drywall can be returned to a supplier, donated, or sold
- Visit www.drywallrecycling.org for additional information and resources

Metals

- Recycle metals found at a construction, demolition, or renovation site
- Common metals include steel, aluminum, and copper
- Local metal scrap yards or recyclers that accept metal materials are typically accessible. Metals are melted down and reformed into metal products
- Visit www.isri.org and www.recycle-steel.org for additional information and resources

Land Clearing Residuals

- Trees and brush can be used as compost or mulch
- Soil can be reused as fill and cover

Recovering Construction and Demolition Materials

Concrete

- Concrete is commonly recycled. It is crushed, the reinforcement bar is removed, and the material is screened for size
- Market outlets for recycled concrete include road base, general fill, pavement aggregate, and drainage media
- Visit www.concreterecycling.org for additional information and resources

Roofing (non-asphalt shingles)

- Reuse sheathing, terracotta, slate, or untreated cedar tiles
- Metal materials can also be recycled

Asphalt Shingles

- Recycle asphalt shingles
- After the removal of nails, asphalt shingles can be ground and recycled into asphalt mixes
- Visit www.shinglerecycling.org for additional information and resources

Architectural Salvage

- Salvage for resale and reuse, doors and door frames, windows, structural systems, millwork, fixtures, and other materials
- Wood structural systems rate highly for end-of-life reuse potential
- Markets are well established and easily accessible

For all construction and debris materials, hazardous or toxic materials should be removed and managed according to local regulations.