

HOME RENOVATION - easy guide to waste reduction

This EASY GUIDE provides top tips for reducing waste during home renovation projects.

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. Deciding what and how to build, whether to demolish or renovate and what materials to use can also impact on the waste created during the project.



8 top tips for waste reduction during home renovation

1. Plan your project so that waste reduction measures are considered right from the start and for all stages of the renovation from demolition to construction.
2. Select building materials and products that reduce waste such as: salvaged / second hand building materials, are standardised to your house dimensions (to reduce off cuts), high recycled content (helping to 'close the loop') or require minimal maintenance and replacement in the long run.
3. Order 'just in time' delivery of products to reduce the storage time before renovation (and the potential for damage).
4. Have accurate cutting lists and quantity surveys to avoid 'over ordering'. Having more product than necessary can lead to inefficient product use.
5. 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 renovation.
6. 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.
7. Set up a single waste storage area – having many smaller bins over one site encourages tradespeople to use the nearest bin (and mix up the various waste types making it harder to recycle).
8. Use the on line databases, trading sites and trade publications to look for or sell second hand materials and recycled products. Visit www.ronz.org.nz or www.wasteexchange.org.nz.

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 'cleanfill' or C&D dumps in New Zealand (according to the 2002 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.

If you added up all the waste from home renovations, together they are a large source of C&D waste. Waste is created through the removal of building components that are no longer healthy, safe, or are out-of-date, by damaging building components, through mistakes in construction and from packaging, offcuts and off specification product.



Benefits of reducing waste during renovation

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

- Reduced cost of waste disposal (recycling is often cheaper than disposal, and reducing waste is free!).
- Income or reduced costs from salvage compared to demolition.
- More efficient use of products = less spending on new materials.
- Reduced home maintenance and running costs.
- Maintenance of houses with heritage or character value.

Want more information on how to be economical with materials and reduce waste during home renovations? See the REBRI GUIDE for Waste Reduction – home renovation, available at www.rebri.org.nz.



Ward Demolition salvage yard, Auckland.

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 building 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.