

## **Waste Management during Construction**

### **Where Does the Waste on a Construction Site come from?**

Waste can be leftover materials from construction, materials from demolition of previous structures such as old pavement or pipes or plastic packaging from the delivery of the material to the construction site. The waste can be split into several different categories and, depending on the material and its previous use, it can be reduced, reused, recycled, recovered or, as a last resort, put into a landfill, meaning they are buried at a waste disposal site. This is not a sustainable way to get rid of waste and is avoided.

### **Why Should the Amount of Waste be Reduced?**

The construction industry is the largest consumer of resources in the UK, using more than 400 million tonnes of material a year. They also contribute to 32% of landfill waste and 13% of the materials being delivered to construction sites are sent directly to landfill without being used. These are numbers that could be decreased by controlling the amount of waste.

### **How Can the Amount of Waste be Controlled?**

In order to keep track of the amount of waste on a construction site someone is given the specific job to do so. This person keeps records of and monitors how much waste is produced on site and what happens to it. Other ways to control the amount of waste are using standard sizes of materials, reusing offcuts as well as storing the material properly to protect it from weather and accidental damage. The construction site can also segregate waste and reuse or recycle as much as possible in order to minimise waste.

### **How can we Recycle the Waste on Site?**

Some examples of ways of recycling waste on site are:

- Moving earth on site from areas where it has been cut to areas where an area needs to be filled and
- Re-using pavement or parts of old pavement as the sub-base for new road either on site or on another construction project.

If the material can't be used on site, the contractor (the organisation doing the physical construction work) may contact the local community to see if they have use for any material that would otherwise have to be removed from site. Much of the waste on site is plastic and comes from things like packaging and over ordering, which leads to the disposal of off-cuts and unused materials. Depending on the type of plastic, it might be recyclable. Some examples of materials used in constructing roads that can be made from recycled plastic include:

- Fencing,
- Plastic kerbstones,
- Drainage pipes,
- Pipe fittings,
- Road signs and lines, and
- Traffic cones.

Reusing plastic diverts it from landfills and encourages the use and demand of recycled plastics.

### **Why is it Important to Minimise Waste Removal on Site?**

By minimising waste removal, transport and the emission of greenhouse gases are also minimised. Furthermore, reusing or recycling as much waste as possible is a sustainable way of working and minimises the amount of waste in landfills, which are already full of waste.

### **Site Waste Management Plan**

A Site Waste Management Plan is prepared before any construction work starts and is updated throughout, as well as at the end of a project. It explains how materials and the waste left over after construction will be reused, recycled or disposed of during and after construction. It is implemented through site induction schemes and training of the site personnel.

The aims of a Site Waste Management Plan are generally:

- To improve efficiency by promoting reuse, recycling and recovery of waste rather than disposal, and
- To ensure there is no illegal dumping of waste by keeping track of the waste

It also increases environmental awareness of the construction site workers.