

WASTE MATERIAL

Particularly Plasterboard

Surveyors advice to clients



ISA member, Steven Brockwell, has drawn attention to recycling sites and municipal refuse tips declining to accept plasterboard.

Environment Agency

Disposal of plasterboard became an issue following Environment Agency guidelines on land-fill laid down from 1st April 2009 for material containing gypsum. Problems arise when gypsum-based plasterboard is mixed with bio-degradable waste as its breakdown in such circumstances is complex and can give rise to hydrogen sulphide gas (H₂S) which is both smelly and toxic.

Land-fill sites

Some land-fill sites will accept gypsum-plasterboard but not all, and it must be separated from other material. The EA licensed merely 17 eligible sites at June 2009, and numbers are bound to become fewer. Land-Fill tax is subject to an annual escalation factor, and 'throwing stuff away' rather than re-cycling is becoming increasingly more expensive for all forms of waste.

Plasterboard

Plasterboard can be messy to handle when it becomes wet and fragile. Furthermore there are handling and processing objections when it is contaminated (or potentially so) with texture coatings which may contain even small amounts of asbestos fibre. These disposal costs may have an impact in the event of an insurance claim where the claims-handler insists on full precautionary asbestos-removal by specialist contractors, even where there is an infinitely small risk of fibre-release. Should notice be given when advising 'rebuild costs' for insurance purposes where asbestos might be presumed?

Insurance reinstatement valuation

In the case of gypsum-based plasterboard there are a number of approved re-cycling companies, who will collect and re-cycle the material, often at a lesser cost than disposal to approved land-fill. Some manufacturers operate 'take-back' schemes for waste/off-cuts of their product.

WRAP website

Useful information can be found on the WRAP website on disposal of various materials and can provide guidance for clients.

Survey Points

Points to watch out for on survey include:

1. Plasterboard can no longer be mixed with other waste destined for land-fill, but needs to be sorted, and disposed of separately – increasing costs of refurbishment.
2. Rubbish disposal if organised via contractors is becoming very expensive – a factor to take account of when surveying commercial or large domestic sites.
3. Take care if you are responsible for managing rubbish skips: A Surrey businessman has recently been sentenced to 240 hours community service after he failed to comply with an Improvement Notice where staff were at risk from objects falling off the skips.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Consider, when carrying out an insurance valuation, any extra costs which might arise from disposal of plaster waste, particularly in the presence of asbestos fibre contaminated by specific materials such as texture coatings. 5. Advise clients who are proposing to undertake refurbishment, about waste regulations and waste management and advise them to take advice from the Environment Agency and WRAP websites. 6. Take note of the Environmental Civil Sanctions (England) Order 2010, designed to prosecute offenders who breach environmental laws, with fines intended to put right damage, even by offenders who have an otherwise good compliance record. 7. Warn clients about the hazards inherent in untidy, poorly-controlled sites
<p>Useful Guidance</p>	<p>Useful References:</p> <p>What is Landfill Tax? www.hmrc.gov.uk/index.htm Enter 'Landfill Tax' in Search Click on Landfill Tax This guide is an introduction to Landfill Tax..... etc</p> <p>Domestic waste, separated domestic factors and asbestos http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/waste/34868.aspx</p> <p>Waste gypsum and plasterboard can be recycled and reused www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/Plasterboard_briefing_note_V3.pdf</p> <p>Gypsum and plasterboard waste www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/waste/32148.aspx</p> <p>Waste exemptions www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/permitting/32322.aspx</p> <p>Plasterboard Waste Regulation www.lafargeplasterboard.co.uk/wps/portal/SustainableDevelopment/WasteRegulation</p> <p>Plasterboard – Find out everything you need to know about plasterboard recycling www.wrap.org.uk/recycling_industry/information_by_material/plasterboard/</p> <p>Plasterboard – about the material www.wrap.org.uk/recycling_industry/information_by_material/plasterboard/plasterboard_about.html</p> <p>Uses of recycled gypsum from waste plasterboard www.wrap.org.uk/recycling_industry/information_by_material/plasterboard/plasterboard_uses.html</p> <p>Ashdown Agreement annual report www.wrap.org.uk/recycling_industry/information_by_material/plasterboard/ashdown.html</p> <p style="text-align: right;">© R.H. Hulls: February 2011</p>