

PAS 402: How it helps reduce waste in your building project

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Paul Cox, Managing Director, Reconomy explains how industry standard PAS 402 is aiding construction firms to meet their waste management targets

After a building project is complete is the waste from the site being re-used and recycled or is it simply going straight to landfill? Functioning as the industry standard, PAS 402 is helping more construction firms meet their **waste management** targets and solutions than ever before.

PAS 402 is a strict code of conduct that ensures that all construction and demolition materials go into a skip that will take the materials to be recycled or re-used in an appropriate way.

This new code of ethics has been created in coordination with the British Standards Institution, which dictates that waste management firms should clearly demonstrate that waste management, landfill diversion, and materials recovery is being handled succinctly and efficiently.

This is good news for construction firms; with these standards in place, construction sites have the ability to produce authoritative information when asked to undertake a waste management audit for a new building or site project. In this way, firms are able to cite the most appropriate contractor for the job, while establishing a cost-effective and legitimate recycling and reuse scheme.

PAS 402 in more detail

Created in 2009 by BSI and CEW (Construction Excellence in Wales), the success of the framework has meant that it is now a common aspect of most waste management audits throughout the UK.

Waste management schemes must now report recovery rates for a variety of materials and where these materials go. These materials include: plasterboard, metals and asbestos. Landfill tonnages are then recorded, which encourages construction firms and waste management businesses to re-use rather than dispose of materials as waste. Independently verified by an inspector, the recovery rates are then evaluated by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS).

The benefits for construction firms

So that it is dealt with in a legal and responsible way, construction firms have a duty of care in regards to the materials they use and how they are disposed. As a result of the PAS 402 scheme each waste contractor is attached to an annual report that details their zero waste ambition targets – reviewing the recovery rates of the materials they handle. What this does is ensures that performance rates between firms are competitive – this allows construction firms to establish what waste management solution is the best for them.

As Landfill Tax continues to rise, waste is an expensive part of the construction process – and is an expense that shouldn't be wasted. From April, the levy will go from £84.40 per tonne to £86.10, with a further rise to £88.95 next year. Under the sustainability benchmarks BREEAM and WRAP, PAS 402 allows the construction industry to establish their performance, which ultimately leads to greater efficiencies in relation to the increase in resources.

Leading the way: Wales

Due to Wales' ambition to achieve its zero-waste initiative by 2050, the PAS 402 has made a significant contribution towards this aim since it was created as a pilot project in 2009.

More than 80 waste management companies have been independently inspected by UKAS, which has resulted in the diversion of two million tonnes of waste to a landfill site.

Furthermore, £17million has been saved by recovering an additional 148,358 tonnes.

The current scheme, which has been known as **Green Compass** since 2013, was launched by CEW in order to tackle the unreliability of waste reporting data. This was minimising the amount of waste that could be recycled. To make sure that the scheme was delivered properly, the PAS was written in conjunction with the CEW – with a further 10 'pathfinder' companies

who were asked for their input and collaboration on the project.

What occurred because of this document was something that the industry could support as a result of its clarity. Staying within the project until its completion all 10 pathfinder companies road-tested the PAS at every stage to ensure and advise on the schemes feasibility. Within the Welsh waste management industry these firms now feel a sense of ownership regarding PAS, and are now its strongest advocates.

Due to the success of PAS 402, waste firms have increased their efficiency rates and have managed to recycle more materials overall, winning the confidence and respect of the construction industry. What this suggests is that rather ignoring waste the construction industry now considers it as a valued asset.

Paul Cox

Managing Director

Reconomy

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