

# Fact Sheet: Drywall



## What is drywall?

Drywall is the most widely used building material for interior walls and ceilings worldwide. It is manufactured from gypsum (hydrous calcium sulfate) and is formed by sandwiching a core of wet gypsum between two sheets of heavy paper. When the core sets and is dried, the sandwich becomes rigid and strong enough for use as a building material.<sup>1</sup>

## Drywall as Waste

C&D waste accounts for about 27% of waste in Calgary landfills. Drywall accounts for 11.1% of C&D waste and an estimated 34,244 tonnes of drywall went to landfills in 2004<sup>2</sup>. Disposal of drywall can pose unique problems such as releasing hydrogen sulfide gas when landfilled, particularly in a wet climate or producing toxic sulfur dioxide gas when incinerated.<sup>3</sup>

## Options for Drywall Waste

### Reuse

- Gunitite Support
- Construction site reuse
- Donation

### Recycle

- Soil amendment
- Composting
- Portland cement
- Reprocessed gypsum for new drywall
- Animal bedding

### Potential Markets for Recycled Drywall

- |                     |                        |                         |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Cement production | • Water treatment      | • Manure treatment      |
| • Stucco additive   | • Flea powder          | • Athletic field marker |
| • Sludge drying     | • Salty soil treatment | • Grease absorption     |

**Due to Vancouver's climate, the city has banned drywall from its landfills. New West Gypsum Recycling, a local drywall recycler, has processed over 2 million tonnes of construction and renovation drywall returned to manufactures for reprocessing.<sup>7</sup>**

**The Alberta Ecotrust's Ecohome processed the waste drywall onsite, using the drywall as a soil amendment during the landscaping phase.<sup>8</sup> Dealing with drywall onsite reduces the total construction waste significantly as drywall accounts for roughly 20% of the total waste created during the construction phase.**

**For more information about drywall recycling please call CMEX staff at (403) 230-1443.**

1 Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drywall>

2 EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. 2006. Executive Summary: The City of Calgary ICI/C&D Waste Characterization Study Prepared for: The City of Calgary, Waste and Recycling Services.

3 Information gather from the Drywall Recycling Organization's website <http://www.drywallrecycling.org/>.

4 Information collected for the California Integrated Waste Management Board website <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/condemo/wallboard/>.

5 <http://www.drywallrecycling.org/>.

6 <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/condemo/wallboard/>.

7 Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council: [http://www.saskwastereduction.ca/crd/drywall\\_recycling.htm](http://www.saskwastereduction.ca/crd/drywall_recycling.htm).

8 [http://www.albertaecotrust.com/ecohome/waste\\_construction.html](http://www.albertaecotrust.com/ecohome/waste_construction.html)