

## **Ethical Disposal and Re-Use**

Surplus furniture can create a real headache for customers. Getting the disposal wrong can cost a lot of money, damage the environment and potentially land you in a social media storm of bad publicity. In some cases incur huge fines.

RHT Group have developed over the last 30 years a different way of helping customers deal with their surplus FF+E.

Background.

Landfill tax is increasing on an annual basis, so disposing of your waste in landfill is going to cost you even more in the future as the government want people to re-cycle. This means that disposing of office furniture is becoming a very expensive exercise as furniture is so big and bulky. By continually throwing office furniture away to Landfill we are harming the environment, wasting valuable materials, wasting money and could damage your reputation and your business.

Many don't Budget for a clearance - Get us involved early and we will have more time to look for suitable outlets.

Corporate Social Responsibility - All good companies big and small should be aware that disposing of furniture in the wrong way can seriously damage your reputation and lose business. Only by using RHT can you be 100% sure EXACTLY what happened to that product.

RHT have the proven track record and take our clients reputation very seriously. We saved a public body 360K in 2014. Ask us how.

Office furniture is typically made up of five different types of materials which could, and should, be recycled: wood, metal, plastics, fabrics and foams. RHT Group have been installing Furniture

office furniture for over 30 years so we have a good idea of how different manufacturers make furniture and the best ways of disassembling, as well as the best ways to recycle each of these materials.

This document outlines the complex processes which go into recycling different types of office furniture.

## **Furniture Recycling— Process**

1. Speak to RHT early - leaving till two weeks before will limit your furniture re-use.

2. Re-Use - The best and greenest option.

The market is flooded with second hand furniture and it is often assumed there is a value to old furniture. Sadly in our experience once the transport and Labour is accounted for the furniture is often not worth anything.

RHT would rather work with our clients and use our network of 19 charities and public bodies to try and get the furniture re used.

RHT do not sell furniture as this would damage our relationships with our trade partners, by donating to Charities or re using elsewhere for our client is ok Any profit for high value items will be given to the client at source.

Where the furniture is old or unwanted we go to the next step. **Full Ethical Recycling.**

### **Wood—**

Each different type of board is unscrewed or removed from the other components and then recycled. Board, Melamine Faced Chipboard, Medium Density Fibreboard or pure timber, is recycled in several different ways.

Wood will be generally made into briquettes for biomass plants or used as a bedding for animals.

### **Metals—**

Metal in the furniture is separated from the other materials using handheld power tools. The main two metals used in office furniture are Aluminium and Steel, both of these metals can be recycled many times, and so it's very important that none are thrown to landfill.

The financial return on metals is low due to the slowdown of China and other countries reducing the need for steel.

We have software that estimates accurately the amount of steel in a project and we offset this with your labour costs. The low price for metals has unfortunately meant there is less of an incentive for some to recycle.

RHT will provide proof – Many say they will and never do.

This often goes un-noticed/un challenged until someone (Internally or Externally asks the question)

Bad publicity damages reputations and could cost someone their job. (Remember Ratner's !)

### **Plastics—**

Any plastics in office furniture will usually be one of the following polymers: PVC, Polypropylene, Nylon and

Polyurethane, although they may all look the same they have individual properties which make them useful

for different components. All the different plastics are removed from the furniture, their polymer identified and

then segregated accordingly. Hard plastics are all granulated by local re-processors

and turned into plastics granules or pellets. These can then be extruded into whatever product is required by the plastics processors, including components for new office furniture.

### **Packaging—**

RHT can recycle all forms of packaging used in the furniture industry, consisting of cardboard, paper, foam, shrink wrap, bubble wrap, stretch wrap and all forms of expanded polystyrene.

### **Fabric—**

Fabric recycling is a time consuming and costly process, (it actually costs far more than landfill)

The fabric is shredded and broken down into individual fibres, and this recycled fabric is used for carpet underlay or as filler for sporting equipment.

### **Foam—**

The foam on seating, sofas and some screens can actually be recycled. This is a very labour intensive process, but if required we will fully strip out and re-cycle if in the specification.

## Example spec for recycling a standard tambour door cabinet

Tambour door metal or wood. - remove plastic doors, remove plastic track top and bottom.

Remove metal lock components from doors

Remove plastic adjustable feet

Remove mfc top and remove plastic or metal inserts from the top.

Remove shelves

Remove clips

Wooden cabinets should be stripped down to save space on vehicle (Less Lorries = less cost + Carbon)

Corner Core or standard Desk

Remove metal lock components from ped

Remove drawer runners

Remove anti tilt mechanism.

Remove drawer fronts

Remove plastic handles

Remove Ballast (if any)

Flatten MFC peds to save space.

Remove plastic adjustable feet

Remove leg Frame. Dismantle into manageable parts.

Remove Electrics. – Including Earth straps.

Remove top and remove all plastic or metal inserts from the top.

Remove plastic cable outlets/grommets

Remove desk screens. Remove metal trims.

## **ETHICAL DISPOSAL PROCESS FOR PACKAGING**

New furniture usually comes well packaged on pallets and/or in boxes.

RHT segregate all waste into wood (pallets) plastic, foam edging, cardboard and strapping.

RHT return waste to our depot and segregate.

RHT hold a waste license and the responsibility for the waste and its ethical disposal is ours. Outlined below are what we do with waste..

- **Pallets** – re used to store other furniture in our warehouse or for product returns.
- **Edging** – re-used to protect edging when transporting product. Excess foam edging will be re-cycled within 1 mile of our depot.
- **Poly bags**- re-used to store clients chairs when in store.
- **Cardboard** – re-cycled less than 1 mile from our depot to minimise carbon footprint
- **Strapping** – carefully re-cycled with care to avoid contact with wildlife
- **Wood** – re-cycled to make wood briquettes for biomass plants or used for bedding for animals in summer.
- RHT London and Warrington – have site balers for Cardboard and Plastic waste streams. Baled waste is sold to recycling companies and this allows us pay for the equipment. This process ensures we are in control of all waste rather than rely on third parties.
- Receipts and waste transfer notes can be provided if required (usually on larger projects)

## **Competition and Price**

RHT Group know you have a choice and we often are compared against a removal or white van and a man company who will remove your furniture go to a tip and push it out.

They won't try and get your furniture re-used and they won't (as they are not fitters) strip the furniture down fully and give you an accurate report on what happened to your furniture.

Some may not even have a waste carriers license. We do.

We welcome competition, however we believe our process is the most cost effective and ethical way of dealing with your redundant FF+E.