

# Carpet Recycling

## Your Flooring Renovation Just Got Greener

By James Alisch, Owner, MIRA Floors and Interiors

Each year, 6.5 billion pounds of carpet are dumped into North American landfills. Metro Vancouver alone contributes 90 million pounds. Mountains of used carpet removed from apartment buildings are a large contributor to the problem.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Carpet is recyclable. The synthetic fibres used to create most carpets are produced using non-renewable petrochemicals. Recycling allows carpet producers to create fewer virgin fibres and use less petroleum.

Until recently, there was no sustainable infrastructure for carpet recycling in Canada and getting started was prohibitively expensive. Thanks to a partnership with Aspera Recycling, Canadian flooring providers, such as Mira Floors, now offer carpet recycling services when removing carpet.

### The recycling process

Carpet has two main recyclable components: face fibre and backing. The process starts with the carpets being bundled and transported to a processing plant where a spectrometer is used to determine the carpet fibre type. Carpets are separated by fibre type and the face fibres are sheared off. Separating by fibre type is essential as each type requires a different processing technique.

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The three most common fibres types are Nylon 6, Nylon 6,6 and Polypropylene. Nylon 6 and 6,6 fibres are especially valuable to carpet recyclers. Once processed, both Nylon 6 and 6,6 recycled fibres can be used to produce everything from more carpet to bearings to toothbrush bristles. Using nylon as an input is a cost effective practice when petroleum prices are high. Polypropylene fibres can



*Shearing carpet. Photo: Mira Floors and Interiors*

be used as feedstock for polypropylene products such as plastic pipes and patio furniture.

The second main component of carpets, the backing, is separated from the fibres in the shearing process. Backing can be turned into more backing or separated into its main ingredients: latex, polypropylene and calcium carbonate. Once separated, the calcium carbonate can be used in cement production. Chip-foam carpet underlay, which is 100% recyclable, is also collected and baled together to be used again in the creation of more carpet pad.

### Why consider carpet recycling for your building?

With increased demand for sustainable practices, carpet recycling is a great way to show your commitment to the environment. Implementing a carpet recycling program can contribute to achieving LEED certification for your buildings. Carpet recycling supports Metro Vancouver's target goal of increasing the rate of waste diversion from 55% to 70% by 2015.

### How can I recycle my carpet?

Recycling is offered by flooring stores as a seamless part of their regular removal and installation services. All customers have to do is choose recycling and the installers take care of the rest. Instead of putting used carpet in the garbage bin, they put it in a designated carpet recycling bin. For larger projects like hallways and common areas, they may bring a disposal bin on site, which is sent directly to the carpet recycling sorting plant once full.

## I don't need pick-up and installation. Can I drop my used carpet off somewhere instead?

Aspera Recycling can help you find the closest store to drop off used carpet. Staff will also explain how carpet needs to be prepared for recycling. Aspera can be reached at (604) 314-2277 or [info@asperarecycling.com](mailto:info@asperarecycling.com).

## What is the future of carpet recycling?

The future of carpet recycling is bright, with the potential of government involvement making it more accessible for everyone. In 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) published a Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations. The Action Plan included a commitment to implement EPR programs for carpet by 2017. EPR programs often include an "eco-fee" that customers pay when purchasing new products. The fee funds all components of the recycling program such as depot operation, transport, and public education.

For more information about carpet recycling and how to get started, see [www.mirafloors.com/carpet-recycling](http://www.mirafloors.com/carpet-recycling). To contact MIRA Floors directly about carpet recycling, call 604-856-4799 or e-mail [james@mirafloors.com](mailto:james@mirafloors.com)



De Jager Volkenant & Company provides a full range of legal services to non-profit housing providers, charities and foundations. We help from incorporation and charity application to wind up and charity revocation, and with all real estate transactions, financing and corporate matters in between.

We also provide litigation & mediation services, specializing in employment and human rights law.

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## FortisBC Furnace Replacement Pilot Program is Back!

Last year, more than 3,000 FortisBC customers participated in the Furnace Replacement Pilot Program, providing them with an \$800 rebate on the purchase of a new, energy efficient furnace or boiler. FortisBC is running the program again this year, with some changes to encourage customers to replace their furnace immediately, rather than waiting until it fails in the future.

### Important dates

- Pre-qualification codes are available until July 1, 2013.
- The furnace or boiler must be purchased, installed and paid in full between April 22 and August 30, 2013.
- Completed applications must be emailed or post-marked by midnight August 30, 2013.

### Pre-qualification

In order to help customers get their rebate processed more efficiently and reduce declined applications, FortisBC is introducing a simple pre-qualification process. Customers must confirm their furnace or boiler is in working condition and that they understand key program terms. **Emergency replacements of furnaces or boilers requiring repairs in excess of \$1,000 (pre-tax dollars including parts and labour) are NOT eligible.**

A pre-qualification code with an application form will be emailed or mailed directly to the customer. There is a limit of one code per account holder. Application forms are only available to customers who successfully complete the pre-qualification process.

### Eligible products

To qualify for the rebate, the heating system must be listed on the eligible product directories at [www.FortisBC.com/furnace](http://www.FortisBC.com/furnace) or with Natural Resources Canada.

The new heating system must be the primary heating system for the home in which it is installed. Heat pump systems and systems where the natural gas furnace/boiler is used as a secondary or back up heating system are NOT eligible for rebates.

To find out more about the program and whether your non-profit housing society is eligible, contact Ian Cullis, BCNPHA's Energy Specialist at (604) 291-2600 ext. 235, or toll-free at 1 (800) 494-8859.