



MASSMART

GROUP UPDATE

Builders Warehouse encourages recycling

In a drive to deliver end-to-end environmental awareness, Builders Warehouse is piloting new in-store recycling bins. Rollout is planned for end-October, so soon all Builders Warehouse, Builders Express and Builders Trade Depot Stores countrywide will be able to provide customers with a safe method of disposal for everyday items that can't be thrown in the dustbin. With South Africans generating 42 million tons of general waste each year, estimated at 0.7kg per person per day and totaling a startling 255kg annually, it is no wonder South Africa's landfills are rapidly reaching saturation point.

Easy disposal of everyday hazardous waste

Recycling is now more important than ever, especially when dealing with consumables that are potentially dangerous to both the environment and humans if tossed on the rubbish dump.

Some common household items such as batteries (rechargeable and disposable) and compact fluorescent lights (CFL) are made using materials that can be harmful to people and the environment if not disposed of appropriately. Consumers often throw away these items with the rest of their rubbish without thinking about where the rubbish goes. In fact, it is usually buried in landfills and harmful substances can leak into groundwater. Without a strong reminder of the importance of responsible waste disposal, people seldom think about it.

Builders Warehouse is piloting their responsible disposal service for these items in their Edenvale and Centurion branches. The chain's new metal recycling bin is wheeled for mobility and its compartments are channelled to separate CFL globes, non-recyclable batteries, rechargeable batteries and fluorescent tubes.

Tracy Allen, strategic business manager at Builders Warehouse, says, "The recycling bins allow us to offer a complete solution to our customers, who are becoming increasingly aware of the need for responsible consumerism."

"The bins include a compartment long enough to accommodate fluorescent tube globes, meaning that there is less chance of broken glass and leakage of potentially harmful chemicals in the stores," she says. "The bins have been designed so that CFLs slide in, reducing the chance of breakage."

The recycling bins also have separate compartments for regular and rechargeable batteries. Batteries contain different metals so they should be disposed of separately. Both, however, still pose a threat to groundwater if dumped in a landfill.

Making responsible disposal easy

While there is currently no South African facility that can recycle regular batteries, Builders Warehouse has contracted a company that encapsulates them in concrete before dispos-

ing of them safely in a licensed landfill. Likewise a safe, audited and efficient process is applied to rechargeable batteries and Builders Warehouse is also using the opportunity to point out to customers the advantages of using rechargeable batteries over disposables.

Allen says, "People want to do the right thing and we want to make it easy for them to act responsibly. Providing the bins right at each store's entrance allows for easy behaviour change."

Because Builders Warehouse sells batteries and CFLs in great volumes, it makes sense for stores to offer a facility for disposing of them. It helps create as a responsible solution in the chain's area of expertise, the home improvement market. ■

