

# Furniture Recycling

For every person in every office

# Furniture Recycling— Process

Landfill tax is increasing on an annual basis, so disposing of your waste is going to cost you even more in the future. 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 we are harming the environment, wasting valuable materials and wasting money.

Office furniture is typically made up of five different types of materials which could, and should, be recycled: woods, metals, plastics, fabrics and foams. Senator has been manufacturing office furniture for over 30 years so we have a good idea of what goes into your 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.

## Wood—

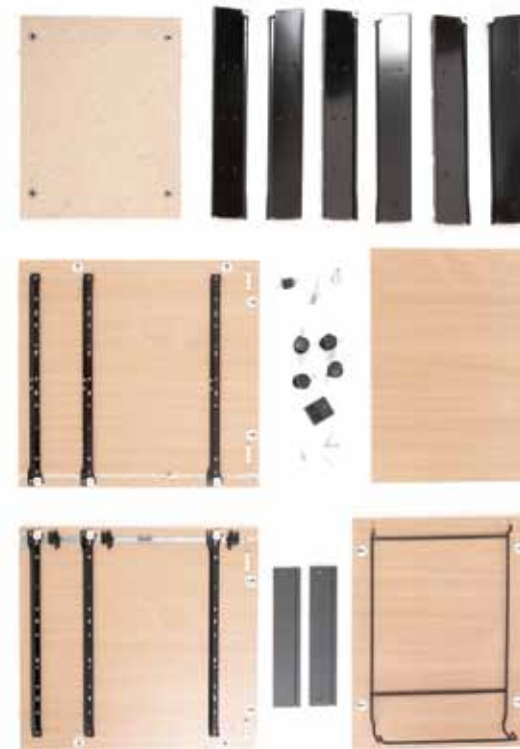
Each different type of board is unscrewed or removed from the other components and then recycled. Board, Melamine Faced Chipboard, Medium Density Fibreboard or pure timber, is recycled in several different ways. Around half the wood recycled is typically used in a large Biomass Boiler in Middlesbrough to generate green energy or as a source of fuel for Biomass Boilers in larger Hospitals around the UK. Approximately 15% of the recycled board is hogged then shredded and used for animal bedding, and the remaining 35% is used in the manufacture of new board panels, creating a closed loop recycling system for desk tops.

The furniture recycling operation accounts for over 1,000 tonnes of wood being recycled each year, which comes at a huge cost to Senator. It is hoped that this cost will be reduced as the operation grows in the future, and so the cost of recycling furniture will then be subsequently reduced to all involved.

## 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.

Senator has five different skips for segregating the different types of metal used in office furniture. Senator also has a bespoke gas strut decommissioning machine, which converts the gas stem in a chair into an inert lump of steel, with the gas being safely released.



### 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.



### Foam—

The foam on seating, sofas and some screens can actually be recycled. This is a very labour intensive process, but is a necessary step to keep Senator's recycling rates so high. The foam from redundant furniture is stripped from the other materials and then transported to Senator's packaging recycling facility to be baled. This foam is then shredded and used in the production of reconstituted foam, which is usually denser than the foam used for office furniture, and typically used for carpet underlay. Despite it being relatively light Senator recycles over 25 tonnes of foam each year.



### Fabric—

All fabric on chairs and screens is stripped away and collected. This fabric is then segregated and transported back to Senator's packaging recycling facility where it is baled together with waste fabric from Senator's new furniture production. Despite fabric being very light Senator recycles around 50 tonnes of fabric each year.

Fabric recycling is a time consuming and costly process, (it actually costs far more than landfill) but is a requirement in the furniture recycling operation. 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 (typically punch bags).

### Packaging—

Senator can recycle all forms of packaging used in the furniture industry, consisting of cardboard, paper, novafoam, shrink wrap, bubble wrap, stretch wrap and all forms of expanded polystyrene. For more information on this please contact Senator on the contact details on the next page.



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Not only is landfilling furniture a waste of your money, it is also a waste of valuable resources which could be reused and recycled. Senator's furniture recycling service offers a solution to both of these important issues, by being far better for the environment as well as being a better option for your bottom line. In today's business climate, can you really afford not to be recycling your furniture?

If you would like a quote for your redundant furniture recycling then please contact Oliver Clarke on **01282 725030** or email [oclarke@senator.co.uk](mailto:oclarke@senator.co.uk).

