

Stripping out: fixtures and fittings

Introduction

Salvaging fixtures and fittings that are in good condition and are easy to remove can be a good source of income when deconstructing buildings. By making fixtures and fittings available for re-use, 'stripping out' can benefit the environment by conserving energy and resources and by reducing greenhouse gases. This fact sheet looks at stripping out items including:

- light and electrical fittings and wiring
- heaters, air conditioners and hot water systems
- doors and windows
- garage doors and gates
- carpets
- down pipes, water and gas pipes
- fireplaces
- kitchen fittings (stoves, sinks, cupboards and benches)
- bathroom and laundry fittings (sinks, shower basins).

Stripping out means that material can be reused in its existing form, reducing energy use and greenhouse gases and conserving scarce resources.

Recovery rates

Recovering items for resale is more cost-effective than paying for disposal; however, because resale values depend on an item's age and condition, your ability to recover useful items when stripping out will vary.

In new, well-maintained houses, recovery rates can be as high as 90 per cent (by weight). In houses where the quality of fittings is low, recovery rates can be as low as 5 per cent (by weight). The house maintenance market deals with most items, regardless of condition. Items in poor condition can be recycled – examples include:

- recycling aluminium frames (metal recycling)
- wool carpets (shredding and insulation)
- wooden doors (shredding and mulch).

Deconstruction versus demolition

Time

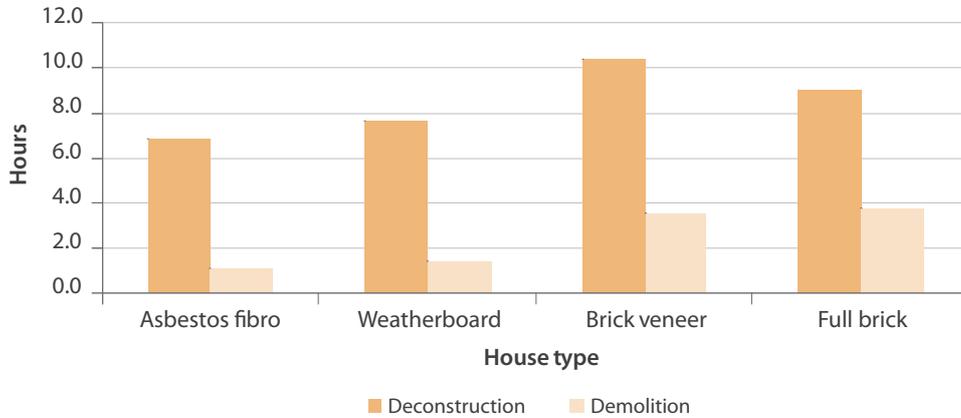
Stripping out takes longer than demolition. You will need to:

- conduct an initial assessment of the property and identify which items to recover
- remove fittings in good condition before commencing other work.



Time comparisons between deconstruction and demolition are outlined in Figure 1. Time includes labour (total hours) and active plant costs.

Figure 1: Time comparisons for stripping out



Cost

Income earned from stripping out depends on age, condition and markets available for each product, so care should be taken to minimise damage and waste. While labour costs are high, income generated from selling fittings in good condition and avoiding landfill disposal costs can offset labour costs.

Table 1: The costs associated with stripping out

Building type	Building area (m ²)	Weight (t)	Costs/(income)		
			Deconstruction	Selective deconstruction	Demolition
Asbestos fibro	150	1	\$117	\$117	\$302
Weatherboard	160	1.5	\$140	\$140	\$272
Brick veneer	200	1.5	\$240	\$240	\$379
Full brick	150	1	\$172	\$172	\$379

* Please note that any income generated from deconstruction is based on purchase prices from recycling yards. If products are to be sold directly to the public the income may be higher. Please note that disposal costs are average costs from a number of facilities in NSW.

Conclusions

High landfill disposal costs make reusing and recycling stripped out materials attractive options. Reuse is recommended because it provides the greatest environmental benefits while the sale of stripped out materials can generate real income.

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