

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE

RECYCLING THAT BUILDS

Background

As part of its environment strategy, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has been recycling the knives and guns that come into its possession. In an innovative scheme, collected weapons have been melted down to construction ready steel by a company that provides materials to a number of construction projects including the London 2012 Olympic Park.

Key themes

The MPS recycling programme, which is extensive, forms part of the Met's commitment to manage waste effectively by reducing, re-using and recycling waste wherever possible. Annual waste reduction targets are set and reported upon, such as the objective to reduce paper consumption across the organisation each year. Re-use initiatives, including articles such as furniture, IT and radio equipment and car parts, seek to reduce the unnecessary purchase of new items, save money and avoid waste disposal costs.

Recycling activity is far-reaching. In addition to various categories of business waste, such as office materials and electrical and electronic equipment, a variety of unusual materials are gathered and recycled. Wherever possible, constructive end uses are found for the recycled materials. Lead, brass and aluminium from used bullets at the Met's firing range are used to fashion photo frames and items of jewellery. Horseshoes are recycled, as is horse manure and bedding, which are used for fertiliser. Fleeces, sweatshirts, the metals from badges on police uniforms and Aramid/Kevlar body armour are all recycled and put to creative end uses, including seat belts for new cars.

The knives and guns handed in by members of the public at police stations across the capital or seized during police operations have formed one strand of this recycling programme. Careful procedures ensure that any weaponry sent for recycling is no longer required as evidence or as a judicial exhibit. Once this has been determined, it is made safe, collected and transported to a local steel recycler, for sorting and melting down to become raw material for alternative uses. >>



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Sarah Foster
Recycling Officer for the MPS



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The recycling of weaponry was begun in 2007-08. The costs of the initiative are met by the steel recycling company. In 2008-09, it raised approximately two thousand pounds for the MPS.

Outcomes

In 2009, some 14 tonnes of guns, knives and keys were collected and melted down for new uses, double the volume collected in 2008.

Sarah Foster, Recycling Officer for the MPS, comments: "The Met is a huge operation across the capital, employing more than 50,000 people working from almost 800 buildings. Our environmental policy has been really successful in minimising the potential environmental impact of what we do for London. We are constantly looking for new ways to recycle and new markets for our recyclable materials, to conserve resources, save energy and money".

Mark Fox, Head of the Met's Criminal Exhibit Services Branch said: "In other areas of our work, we can auction items that come into our possession – in accordance of course, with specific legislation detailing what can be done and when. We use the proceeds to support good charitable causes, such as those that help victims of crime. In this way, like the knife and gun recycling scheme, we are working to turn things associated with damage and harm into positive outcomes for the communities we serve. We are pleased whenever we can take a dangerous weapon off the street and out of harm's way."

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For any additional information on this case study or other MPS related work in this area, please contact the Central Responsible Procurement Team at responsibleprocurement@tfl.gov.uk



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