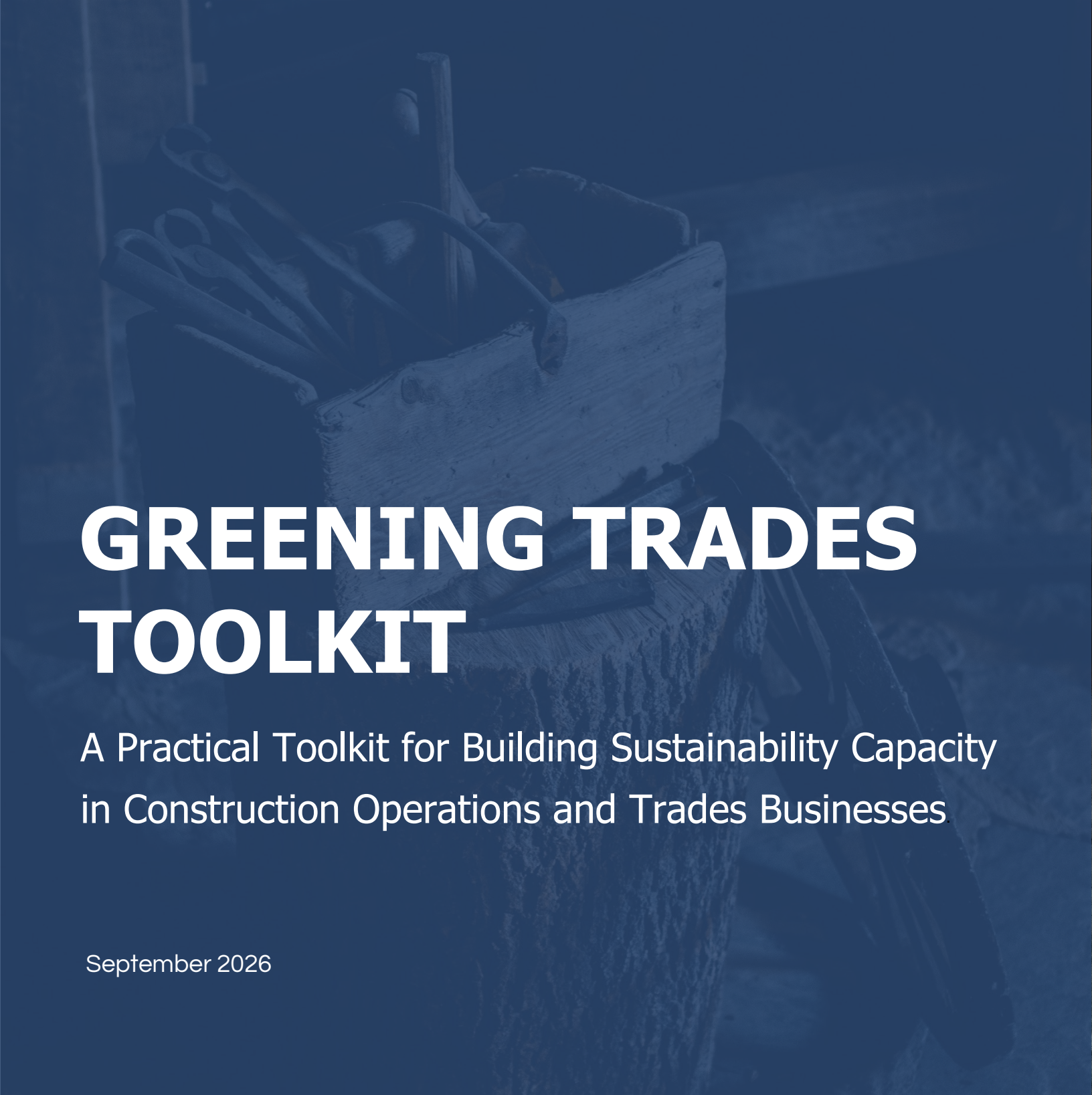




GREENING TRADES TOOLKIT

A Practical Toolkit for Building Sustainability Capacity
in Construction Operations and Trades Businesses

September 2026

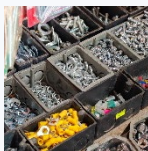
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Introduction

There has never been a more exciting time to be a Metro Vancouver trades business. With plenty of construction and infrastructure projects in progress, and an extensive pipeline of new projects on the horizon, many trades businesses are experiencing high levels of growth.

In addition to growing, trades businesses are also adapting to meet new regulations, evolving industry standards, changing customer expectations, and incorporate new practices and technologies into their offerings. Many of the changes affecting trades businesses now are related to climate change and sustainability initiatives. Ambitious emissions reduction targets, new building regulations, skilled labour shortages, seasonal water restrictions, and an increased focus on Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste are all top of mind for many trades professionals. Yet these challenges are large in scope and can be difficult to understand, let alone tackle. That's why this toolkit was created.

The Greening Trades Toolkit is a starting point for trades that want to take first steps towards incorporating sustainable thinking into day-to-day operations at the workplace.

Who this toolkit is for: This Greening Trades Toolkit is intended for trades and construction businesses, including carpentry, electrical, finishing, HVAC, plumbing, civil, landscaping, and other contracting professions. It is primarily designed for business owners, site supervisors, project managers, and sustainability or operations leads. It is intended to serve as a practical guide to help businesses assess their current practices and integrate sustainability into everyday operations, procurement, and jobsite activities in realistic and achievable ways.

The case studies and resources have been tailored towards Metro Vancouver trades businesses. The toolkit is aimed at SME (Small to Medium Enterprises) from sole traders to businesses with approximately 500 employees or less.

How to use this toolkit: Just like tools in a toolbox, this toolkit has been designed so that each section can be used independently to tackle a specific challenge or improvement initiative. Trades businesses only need to use the sections that are most relevant for their work.

This toolkit is aligned with the [BC Green Business Trades checklist](#) and can be used before a certification process to review current practices as well as after a certification process to consider future initiatives.

Synergy Foundation

[Synergy Foundation](#) is a nationally recognized organization with a reputation for executing scalable, hands-on projects that drive sustainable economic development. We are committed to supporting communities and small-to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in adopting circular economy practices and advancing green business operations.

Grounded in the belief that mobilizing changemakers accelerates the transition needed for a sustainable future, we act as an ecosystem enabler — fostering innovation, partnerships, knowledge-sharing, policy advocacy, and funding opportunities. Through these efforts, we help guide communities and local economies toward a regenerative future.

Core programs include [BC Green Business](#), [Project Zero](#), and the [Ecostar Awards](#).

Building and Operations: Worksite Lighting

Worksite lighting maintains safety and productivity in the site office and on job specific applications. Active worksites need excellent visibility, especially during winter months with reduced sunlight hours. Recent product advances have made LED (Light-Emitting Diode) lighting a clear winner when it comes to the worksite.

Key Information

LED lighting:

- ☑ **Saves money** and is more energy-efficient than incandescent or halogen.
- ☑ **Lasts longer**, typically 25,000+ hours.
- ☑ Handles shocks, vibration, and impact.
- ☑ Generates far less heat than other lighting types, making it **safer** to use in tight spaces.
- ☑ Can often be fully **recycled**, making it environmentally friendly.

Action Plan

- ☐ Ensure your **purchasing guidelines** for new worksite lighting specify LED products.
- ☐ **Phase out** legacy worksite lighting (e.g. incandescent, halogen, and compact fluorescent lamps). Contact [Product Care Recycling](#) for recycling options.
- ☐ Advise staff to **turn off work lights** when not in use. Site signage can help as a reminder.
- ☐ **Educate** your customers about the benefits of LED lighting in their project – they could be eligible for [BC Hydro energy efficiency incentives](#).

Did You Know?

A **lumen** measures the brightness of a light source. The higher the lumen rating, the brighter the light appears to the human eye.

Case Study

When [Magnum Construction Services \(MCS\)](#) was established 10 years ago, they purchased all LED jobsite lighting and have not looked back since. LED lighting ensures their tradespeople can work safely and produce high-quality outputs. They educate staff to turn off jobsite lights when leaving the work area and their site manager checks the whole site to ensure lighting is off before leaving at the end of the day.



"Using LED jobsite lighting is important for our reputation. 90% of the time we are drawing power from our customers' premises so it's important to show we are being energy conscious." Mai Eilia, Project Manager, [Magnum Construction Services](#).

Building and Operations: Worksite Power Supply

Reliable power is essential on any worksite, ensuring that crews can safely operate tools, equipment, and temporary systems without costly interruptions. In B.C. approximately 97% of electricity generated for the grid comes from renewable sources. For construction sites, a power connection to the grid (if available) by way of a temporary pole is usually the most convenient choice. For temporary applications and sites where a grid connection is not feasible, trades have a growing array of power generation and storage options.

Key Information

- ☑ Portable generators typically use fossil fuels such as diesel, gasoline, propane, or natural gas. Portable **inverter generators** still use these fuels, however they are quieter, fuel-efficient, and produce higher-quality power output (suitable for sensitive electronics).
- ☑ **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** offer a way to store electricity from the grid or a generator and release it only when it's needed. When combined with diesel generators, they can reduce run times, associated noise, and fuel consumption.
- ☑ Portable **solar chargers** and power banks are increasingly commonplace for charging low-energy devices.

Action Plan

- ☐ When renting temporary power solutions, talk to your supplier and **right-size the solution** for the job. Ask about fuel efficiency, low-noise, and low-emission options. Outline options with your customer as they may be willing to pay a premium for a quieter solution.
- ☐ When considering new purchases, use a **generator sizing worksheet** to list all the tools, lights, and equipment that could operate at the same time. The worksheet should add a safety margin (usually 20%).
- ☐ Advise staff to **turn off equipment** and power generators, when not in use. Site signage can help as a reminder.

Case Study

Product advances have made portable battery systems a feasible option for jobs that previously required a gas generator. The [Instagrid](#) provides clean and quiet power suitable for heavy-duty tools.



"Rethinking how power is delivered on a jobsite can mean fewer cable runs, fewer trip hazards, less noise, and no fumes. The [Instagrid](#) is an ideal solution for high power short duration jobs, often removing the need to haul a generator around the site."

Nicholas McKenzie, Owner, [kWattWorks](#).

Did You Know?

Starting watts (or surge/peak watts) are the temporary power needed to start tools and appliances. **Running watts** (or rated watts) are the continuous power required to keep those tools and appliances operating.

Building and Operations: Worksite Temporary Flooring Protection

Construction and renovation projects need the right flooring protection to prevent costly repairs. Paint spills, dust, dirt, dropped tools, and high foot traffic can all cause damage to flooring if left unprotected. Having the right flooring protection in place is also an essential safety consideration to reduce slipping and tripping hazards. Choosing the right flooring protection depends on the floor being protected (hardwood, tile, carpet, or concrete) and the level of construction activity. Long term or high traffic sites will require more durable protection.

Key Information

- ☑ **Reusable canvas drop cloths** are durable and breathable, protecting flooring from dust, paint drips, and low impact drops.
- ☑ **Heavy-duty floor protection boards** (such as Ram Board) are breathable, spill resistant, and provide protection from heavy traffic and machinery.
- ☑ **Self-adhesive films and painter's plastic** are often only single-use and can pose issues with recycling.

Action Plan

- ☐ **Reuse** flooring protection across multiple worksites to save time, cost, and reduce waste to landfill.
- ☐ **Avoid single-use** flooring protection.
- ☐ Check the **sustainability credentials** of the flooring protection you are using.
- ☐ Look for products made from **recycled content**.

Did You Know?

Many temporary flooring protection products are made from recycled materials, such as reclaimed cardboard.

Want to Know More?

[How to Protect Your Floors](#)
(Handcrafted by Chris Palmer on YouTube)

Case Study

The cost of damage to client flooring is a top concern for [Magnum Construction Services \(MCS\)](#), so they select protection products that are durable and waterproof. MCS reuses their flooring protection across sites, prioritizing products that are light and easy to clean, with materials often lasting up to 3 years or approximately 20 sites before being discarded. MCS found [Axiom Armour Protection Board Green HD](#) to be the perfect fit for their construction process.



"I love this product because it maintains the professionalism of our company. During the project, it's easy to quickly mop and ensure the jobsite is presentable. After the project, we clean the sheets and store them or take them to our next job. Although the initial cost was slightly higher, we see time savings during installation and material cost savings through reuse." Mai Eilia, Project Manager, [Magnum Construction Services](#).

Waste: Composting Organics

When people think about construction waste, they picture concrete and drywall, but organic materials such as food scraps and vegetation are also common on worksites and can showcase worksite excellence when managed properly. Metro Vancouver [banned food scraps](#) from landfill to prevent methane emissions that occur when food is comingled with other waste. Worksites can effectively deal with organic waste with the right bins, signage, education, and support from the industry such as waste haulers.

Key Information

- ☑ Choosing the [right waste hauler](#) for a worksite is one of the most important decisions to make when dealing with organic waste. Haulers can **support onsite efforts** with container signage, posters, mobile apps, training, audits, and reporting.
- ☑ For **low-volume food scraps**, your customer may be willing to allow your business to use their organics collection.
- ☑ **Not all facilities** will accept products labeled as compostable or biodegradable. Check what is [acceptable and unacceptable](#) in your organics waste stream.

Action Plan

- ☐ **Connect** with your waste hauler to ensure bins and [signage](#) are available for the organics waste stream.
- ☐ **Advise staff** about what is [acceptable](#) to be placed in organic bins.
- ☐ Incorporate organic waste topics into regular **site meetings**.

Did You Know?

Even products labelled “compostable” might not be suitable for the compost bin. Many labelled [compostable plastics](#) and bioplastics, such as PLA (Polylactic Acid) cannot be accepted as they do not break down properly in all composting facilities in B.C.

Quiz: Which action helps ensure proper handling of organic waste on a worksite?

- A. Letting workers guess which materials belong in organics
- B. Incorporating organic waste topics into regular site meetings
- C. Using one bin for all waste streams
- D. Avoiding signage to reduce clutter



Check your answer on page 27.

Waste: Recycling and Reducing Plastics

While plastics comprise a small share of construction waste by weight, they have a disproportionate environmental impact because they contaminate soils, break down into microplastics, and do not decompose in landfills. Single-use plastics such as films, wraps, strapping, and geotextiles are often suitable for recycling when properly sorted. Jobsites can deal with plastic waste with the right bins, signage, education, and support from waste haulers.

Key Information

- ☑ **Contaminated plastics**, such as dirty plastics from excavation activities, will usually be unsuitable for recycling - keep them separate from clean plastics.
- ☑ **Remove fixings and adhesives** from plastic waste (such as tape, loose nails, and staples in lumber wrap) as they can disrupt recycling processes.
- ☑ For space constrained sites, some haulers provide **bin dividers** or **megabags** to help with sorting. Some haulers also offer live loading and hand-sorting services.

Action Plan

- ☐ Ensure **plastics separation** is part of all solid waste management plans.
- ☐ Include **plastic waste training** during site orientation for staff and subcontractors.
- ☐ Ask suppliers and clients to specify products that **minimize packaging**, have take-back programs, or are made with recycled content.

Did You Know?

The most common plastic waste at construction sites in Metro Vancouver is low-density polyethylene (LDPE) from mass timber packaging, soft plastic bags, poly sheeting, lumber wraps, and shrink wraps.

Case Study

A [recent pilot project](#) in Metro Vancouver collected plastics from eight construction sites and recycled the waste into useful building materials. Waste plastics such as lumber wrap were successfully pelletized and then recycled by blending into a construction product manufactured by [Plascon Plastics](#). The [InfinaNet](#) end product is a concrete void system that reduces concrete use in floor and wall slabs.



"The plastics that trades crews sort and set aside on site don't disappear, they can come back as the building itself. [InfinaNet](#) is proof that what leaves a jobsite as waste can be upcycled into a better, lower-carbon building product." Manveer Pattar, President, [Infina Technologies](#).

Want to Know More?

[Metro Vancouver: Construction and Demolition Waste Reduction Toolkit](#).

Waste: Recycling Paint Containers

Paint and coating containers are one of the most visible finishing stage waste streams on a worksite. They present a simple opportunity for trades to save on landfill costs and improve waste diversion. Many paint containers are covered through B.C.'s [extended producer responsibility program](#) operated by [Product Care Recycling](#). These paint products already include their disposal charge in the purchase price.

Key Information

- ☑ For small volumes of used containers or leftover paint, contractors and tradespeople can **bring up to 10 containers per day** to any of the 200+ designated [Product Care depots](#) in B.C.
- ☑ For larger volumes (minimum of 4' x 4' x 3' pallet/tubskid), the worksite may be eligible for a [free pick-up](#), **saving haulage fees** and landfill costs.

Action Plan

- ☐ Ensure paint containers are part of the **solid waste management** plan for all projects.
- ☐ Check that painting **subcontractors** are using the available recycling facilities with their products.
- ☐ Incorporate **paint container waste training** into site orientation for staff and subcontractors.
- ☐ **Discuss** paint container waste with your suppliers and clients. Ask them to prioritize specifying products that are eligible for Product Care Recycling and are made with recycled content.

Did You Know?

[100% of metal paint containers](#) and 92% of HDPE(#2) plastic paint containers returned through Product Care Recycling depots in B.C. were recycled in 2024.

Case Study

[Luval Painting Inc.](#) services residential and commercial clients throughout Metro Vancouver. At the end of each project they offer leftover paint to their clients for future touchups. Ceiling paint and primer is carried over from job to job. Any unwanted tinted paint and empty containers are taken to the local [Product Care Recycling](#) depot for processing.



"Paint recycling is easy, I just take my empty gallons to the local depot at the end of the day and then head home. I recycle because it's good practice, it costs nothing, and it means I'm not stuck with empty containers taking up space in my work van." Luis Valdez, Co-Owner, [Luval Painting Inc.](#)

Want to Know More?

[Product Care Recycling: Paint in BC.](#)

Waste: Construction and Demolition

Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste is a major environmental issue, accounting for about one-third of all waste sent to Metro Vancouver landfills. Reusing, salvaging, and recycling building materials helps to reduce landfill waste and conserve resources. By adopting simple waste reduction practices, trades businesses can lower disposal costs, improve efficiency, and reduce environmental impact.

Key Information

- ☑ **Deconstruction** is a preferred alternative to traditional demolition as it recovers valuable materials, reduces dust and noise, and can significantly offset project costs through material sales and tax credits.
- ☑ Effective C&D waste management requires **planning and compliance**, including identifying hazardous materials before demolition, separating recyclable materials on site, and tracking waste diversion.

Action Plan

- ☐ Create a simple **waste management plan** for your next project by identifying recyclable materials, assigning collection bins, and designating a staff member to oversee waste sorting.
- ☐ Contact your [local recycling facility](#) or waste hauler to confirm what construction materials they accept, then **begin separating** wood, metal, concrete, and drywall on your current job site to reduce disposal costs.
- ☐ Consider **deconstruction** instead of demolition on your next project. Metro Vancouver maintains a directory of [local service providers](#).

Did You Know?

Deconstruction can [enable up to 95%](#) of building materials to be reused or recycled.

Case Study

When [Horizon Eco Builders](#) starts a new renovation project they always spend the first few days methodically deconstructing the space so that the building materials can be reused or recycled. The reclaimed materials are often reintegrated in the renovation, sold, or given away.

- ☑ Reclaimed lumber is often reused on the project itself.
- ☑ Cabinets, appliances, doors, and windows are reused, sold, or given away.
- ☑ Drywall, cardboard, metal, lumber, and plastic are recycled, where possible.
- ☑ Plumbing fixtures, lighting fixtures, and electrical equipment are sold or given away.



"Deconstructing is a win for everyone. I don't have to invoice my clients for waste collection, it retains the character of the building, and it's a big win for the planet."
Simon Druart, Co-founder, [Horizon Eco Builders](#).

Want to Know More?

[Metro Vancouver: Construction and Demolition Waste Reduction Toolkit](#).

Water: Managing Water at the Worksite

Water is one of the most relied on resources at the worksite, yet it often goes unnoticed until costs rise or [restrictions](#) come into play. From equipment washdowns and dust suppression to hydrovac operations, drinking water, and everyday cleanup, water underpins many aspects of the worksite. A good starting point for improving water management is simply understanding where and how it is being used.

Key Information

- ☑ Knowing where and how water is used at the worksite helps **manage it effectively** and keep operations running smoothly.
- ☑ Metro Vancouver **relies heavily on stored water** through the dry summer months, making [seasonal restrictions](#) common.

Action Plan

- ☐ Walk through the worksite to identify common water uses. Note down where water is used and what it is being used for. This establishes a **baseline for improvement** and can help identify inefficiencies early.
- ☐ Advise staff to **turn off taps** when not in use. Ensure any leaks are reported and equipment repaired or replaced promptly. Site signage can help as a reminder.
- ☐ Incorporate water management topics into site meetings. Sharing water usage information (e.g. from meter readings or utility bills) demonstrates that **efficient water use is a priority**. Ask your staff if they see water being used unnecessarily.

Did You Know?

Metro Vancouver uses an average of [384 litres of drinkable water](#) per person per day. Reducing water usage at the worksite can lessen the demand on water infrastructure and prevent future water restrictions that affect everyone.

Case Study

When [Magnum Construction Services \(MCS\)](#) reviewed their water use at the worksite, they found that most of their water use occurred at the cleanup stage. Taking a closer look at their cleanup activities, they decided to **only use water and vinegar** for cleaning surfaces. Noting the environmental impact of cleaning chemicals, and their potential to damage cabinetry and hardwood floors, their decision has benefited the business through reduced cleaning product costs and maintaining a reputation for sustainable practices.



"Although we typically do not need to use a lot of water during home renovation projects, we are still very conscious of the water that we do use – ensuring that we only use what's needed and that we do not introduce unnecessary chemicals that could contaminate our waste waterways."

Mai Eilia, Project Manager, [Magnum Construction Services](#).

Water: Considering Non-Potable Water Sources

Many activities on the jobsite need water, but not all of them need drinking quality water. Differentiating between potable and non-potable water use at the jobsite can save money and support better environmental outcomes.

Key Information

- ☑ **Potable water** is safe to drink and cook with, having been through a treatment and filtration process. Most residential tap water supplies are potable.
- ☑ **Non-potable water** is unsafe to drink and cook with. It has many uses at the jobsite such as dust and fire suppression, pressure washing, site facilities, hydrovac, and landscaping.
- ☑ Non-potable water **costs less** than potable water because it does not need to go through a treatment process. It can be sourced from bulk water fill stations.
- ☑ Using non-potable water instead of potable water has sustainability benefits because it **conserves drinking water**.
- ☑ Water haulers can **deliver** non-potable water to support jobsite needs. Water can be used directly from a water truck or to fill onsite storage totes for later use.
- ☑ Rainwater can be **collected** as runoff from a site office roof and stored in a rain barrel for low volume non-potable water applications, such as for cleaning tools.

Did You Know?

Non-potable water systems are a common sustainability practice as projects look to reduce demand on drinking water supplies. The [rainwater harvesting system at BC Place](#) collects rainwater from eleven acres of roof area and uses this to fill field washing trucks and equipment, reducing demand on drinking water supply.

Action Plan

- ☐ **Discuss** the benefits of non-potable water use with staff and subcontractors.
- ☐ **Educate** your customers about the benefits of non-potable water use and see if non-potable water systems could be incorporated in their designs.
- ☐ **Identify** jobsite areas that do not require drinking quality water and see if non-potable water can be used to service these areas.

Case Study

To suppress dust during a demolition job, the contractors at this West Vancouver site brought in [Clearset Enterprises](#). Non-potable water was hauled in to dampen down the area.



"With access being constrained at this site, our driver parked the water truck at the top of the driveway and ran a hose down to the demo area. Keeping the demolition debris wet meant fine particles did not blow into neighbouring yards or get inhaled by workers." Trish Rossum, [Clearset Enterprises](#).

Water: Vehicle Washing Options

Keeping work vehicles clean helps to maintain a professional business image and protects the value of vehicle investments. With water use becoming more widely scrutinized, responsible washing of work vehicles is vital in maintaining a trusted reputation with customers. Planning a regular vehicle wash schedule at locations convenient to a home, office, or worksite keeps vehicles on brand and in work-ready condition.

Key Information

- ☑ **Save time** by considering automatic tunnel or rack wash (containment pad) vehicle washing services. Commercial high-pressure wand (self-serve) and handwash/detailing services can also be considered.
- ☑ Commercial car washes typically use recirculating water, have specialized drains, and use up to [seven times less water](#) than standard soap and water washing.
- ☑ Wastewater from vehicle washing can contain toxic chemicals from cleaning products, oil and grease, grit, and heavy metals. These can damage aquatic life and the natural environment. **Never discharge vehicle wastewater to storm drains**, ditches or manholes, or allow runoff to the street.

Action Plan

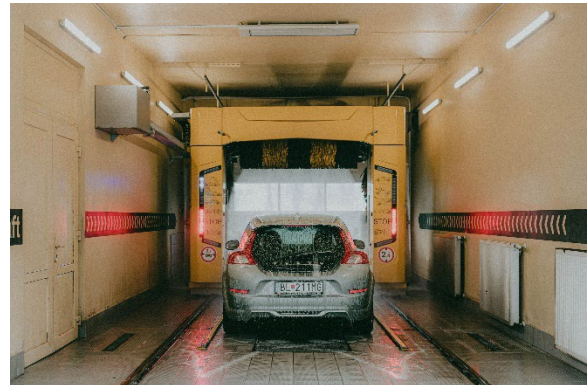
- ☐ Create a **regular schedule** for washing work vehicles at a convenient location. Ask about the environmental credentials of your local vehicle wash service, such as use of recycled water and non-toxic chemicals.
- ☐ **Never clean a vehicle on the street** as it can contaminate stormwater and the natural environment. You could also face a [fine](#) and reputational damage.

Did You Know?

Commercial vehicle wash operators are required to [install an interceptor](#) to prevent oil and solids from entering the wastewater system.

Case Study

[New Look Drywall](#), based in Langley, uses a car and a truck to service residential and commercial drywall installation clients. Business owner, Joe Horrocks, maintains a monthly cleaning schedule to keep his vehicles in good condition and free from dust. He takes his vehicles to the local automatic car wash station to save time and water use.



"Living on a farm means my vehicles collect dust quickly and because my water comes from a well, I'm careful of my water use. Taking my vehicles through the local car wash is a convenient way to keep my vehicles looking good at the jobsite."
Joe Horrocks, Owner, [New Look Drywall](#).

Want to Know More?

[Metro Vancouver: Water restrictions.](#)

Transport: Getting to the Office, Workshop, or Showroom

Trades businesses can benefit from the many transport options available in the Metro Vancouver region. Carpooling, carsharing services, taxi/ride-hailing services, public transit, cycling, scooters, and walking are often feasible alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commutes. Trades businesses that take advantage of these transport options can benefit from time and cost savings, improved customer loyalty and reputation, and enhanced employee recruitment and retention.

Key Information

- ☑ Carpooling is a great way to promote team building, reduce transport costs, and **free up carparks** at your workplace.
- ☑ Public transit can be a convenient transport choice that saves vehicle and parking costs. The [TransLink for Organizations](#) program allows trades businesses to partially or fully **subsidize transit costs** for employees.
- ☑ Vancouver is the most [walkable large city](#) in Canada. Trades businesses can **encourage walking to work** by creating a walking culture and offering commuter perks and incentives.
- ☑ Cycling is a **perfect transport option** for [commutes less than 5km](#). Employers can encourage cycling by providing secure bike storage, end of trip facilities, offering financial incentives, and joining organizations such as [HUB Cycling](#).

Did You Know?

Walking, cycling, and public transit account for [approximately half of all daily trips](#) in the City of Vancouver, helping reduce congestion, parking demand, and transportation emissions.

Action Plan

- ☐ Provide **priority car parking** spaces for carpoolers in the most desirable spots.
- ☐ Consider joining the [TransLink for Organizations](#) program.
- ☐ Celebrate a **walk to work culture** by participating in events like [Walk 30](#).
- ☐ Support cyclist commuters by providing **secure bike storage** and end of trip facilities.
- ☐ Offer **guaranteed ride home** options to provide a reliable transport option in the case of an emergency.

Quiz: Cycling is an ideal transport option for which type of commute?

- A. Commutes longer than 20 km
- B. Commutes less than 5 km
- C. Only weekend commutes
- D. Commutes with heavy equipment



Check your answer on page 27.

Transport: Getting to the Jobsite

Trades businesses often need to work at temporary jobsites, anything from a quick maintenance task at a home or office, to a multiyear contract at a construction site. Temporary jobsites pose unique challenges and opportunities for staff transportation. Trades businesses that incorporate sustainable thinking into their jobsite transportation can gain work efficiencies, improve staff morale and retention, and differentiate themselves in the market.

Key Information

- ☑ Carpooling and vanpooling reduces parking congestion at sites and allows **HOV lane use**.
- ☑ **Ridesharing apps** and taxis are best for short or infrequent travel.
- ☑ **Carsharing platforms** and vehicle rentals can provide greater flexibility when compared to vehicle purchases or leases.
- ☑ **Walking, cycling, and taking public transit** to the jobsite are often feasible options.

Did You Know?

[Vanpooling](#) is an economical commute option best suited for longer trip lengths or where onsite parking is congested. Platforms such as [Liftango](#) and [RideShark](#) can help trades businesses manage travel modes options including employee-only [vanpools](#).

Action Plan

- ☐ When planning jobs **consider carpooling** or vanpooling options for staff.
- ☐ Consider **membership** with a local taxi company or a ridesharing app to receive service benefits and simplified billing.
- ☐ Review carsharing and vehicle rental offerings as **flexible transport alternatives**.
- ☐ **Talk to your staff** and see if there are any barriers to walking, cycling, or public transit that you can assist to remove.

Case Study

When the jobsite becomes more than a 40-minute commute for staff, [Green Island Builders](#) switches to a “4 by 10” work week. Rather than working Monday to Friday, the job is scheduled for 4 days per week with 10-hour shifts, giving people an extra day back each week. The 4 by 10 schedule reduces time spent commuting and saves in fuel costs. A carpool is arranged informally and the driver is compensated for their extra time and mileage.



“The scheduling piece took some adjustment, particularly with subtrades, but overall it’s worked very well. The system has reduced our staff driving times and improved their quality of life.” Martin Scaia, Managing Director, [Green Island Builders](#).

Transport: Jobsite Deliveries

Getting the right materials to the jobsite at the right time is a critical concern for any site supervisor or project manager. Storing excess materials on site risks weather damage and takes up valuable space. Delayed deliveries and missing items can hold up trade progress and delay project tasks. Even the most carefully planned jobsite can be challenged once work is underway and issues such as incorrect orders, faulty parts, and damaged materials begin to emerge.

Key Information

- ☑ **Deliveries** to the jobsite by suppliers saves labour hours and minimizes damage liability. Preventing staff from ad-hoc store pickups keeps skilled workers on the tools.
- ☑ A **receiving process** should include a visual inspection of all materials entering the site and signoff by an authorized person. Signoff ensures the correct items have been received, are free from defects/damage, and are in right quantities.
- ☑ **Job site planning** and scheduling ensures the right materials are ordered and delivered ready for the upcoming project tasks. Time spent upfront on job planning will pay off as jobsites run more smoothly and efficiently.
- ☑ **Active site management** can help minimize accidental damage to materials.

Action Plan

- ☐ Create a policy that requires materials to be **delivered by the supplier** to site. Only allow staff to pick up materials from the store by exception and with prior approval.
- ☐ Create a **materials receiving process** to check for defects and correct quantities.
- ☐ Create a comprehensive **bill of materials** for each job and schedule deliveries to meet the project timeframes.
- ☐ Ensure materials are **securely stored** on site and protected from the weather.

Case Study

With 5 or 6 jobsites on the go at any one time, [Green Island Builders](#) needs to carefully plan and sequence their work to make efficient use of the team's time. Every three weeks a "**den day**" brings the team together to map out their upcoming activities on a whiteboard.



"The den days bring everyone together in person to plan our upcoming work. Better planning reduces emergency supplier trips, duplicate deliveries, material shortages, and unnecessary driving between jobsites and suppliers." Martin Scaia, Managing Director, [Green Island Builders](#).

Did You Know?

A tradesperson spends approximately 15% of their time on materials handling.

Purchasing and Products: Prioritizing Locally Made Materials

Trades businesses can strengthen operations and community impact by prioritizing locally made materials in their purchasing decisions. Sourcing materials that are made within the region supports local industry, reduces transport-related emissions, and provides access to products designed with local conditions, regulations, and customer needs in mind.

Key Information

- ☑ Building relationships with **local manufacturers** can be a rewarding and mutually beneficial exercise. Understanding how locally made materials are produced can position you as a **trusted expert**, as you can speak knowledgeably about the products you're working with.
- ☑ Finding locally manufactured products can be as simple as **asking suppliers** which items in their catalogue are produced locally. Speaking with other contractors and tradespeople about locally made products is another way to discover new options.

Action Plan

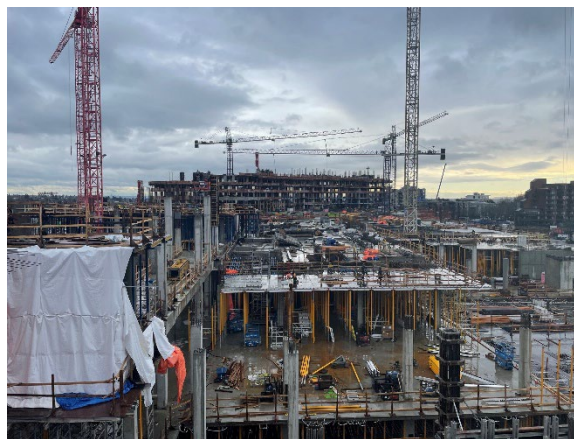
- ☐ **Ask suppliers** which items in their catalogue are locally made.
- ☐ Arrange a **site visit** to local manufacturing facilities or invite product representatives to your jobsite to better understand your day-to-day needs.
- ☐ **Regularly check** for new locally made materials that could support your business by attending trade events, joining relevant local trade associations, and staying connected in the industry and community.

Did You Know?

[Well Made Here](#) is an independent third-party verifier of domestically produced construction products. It maintains a directory of [participating manufacturers](#).

Case Study

Several prominent B.C. roofers have played an integral role in installing the roofing membrane at the [Oakridge Park development](#). One of the chosen products, SBS, is manufactured locally by [Soprema](#) at their [Chilliwack production plant](#) offering several benefits such as reduced lead times, lower shipping costs, and support for installers from local technical experts. Once installed, the product became a core component supporting the green roof park overtop.



"The complexity of this project was huge. The final goal, a functional rooftop park, is reliant on the successful coordination of multiple trades, multiple products, and multiple design objectives, all working in a single area. [Soprema](#) was able to support the roofing contractors and related project partners through locally supplied materials and by providing boots on the ground for site reviews and locally relevant technical support." Josh Stewart, [Sopranature®](#) Technical Representative.

Purchasing and Products: Materials Declarations for Sustainability

Being familiar with materials declarations shows an understanding of how materials are sourced, manufactured, and disposed of, as well as the associated environmental, social, and health impacts across their lifecycle. Understanding materials declarations can enable trades businesses to provide product guidance and support customer decision-making. It can strengthen a business' ability to win building contracts.

Key information

☑ An **Environmental Product Declaration** (EPD) is a standardized and voluntary way of outlining the environmental impact of a product across its full lifecycle. EPDs are commonly found for construction materials like cement, lumber, and steel. EPDs are verified by independent third parties and are commonly used to demonstrate performance in sustainable building certifications.

☑ A **Health Product Declaration** (HPD) is a standardized and voluntary report that discloses a building product's chemical ingredients and associated health hazards. HPDs are commonly found for flooring products, windows and doors, plumbing materials, and paints and coatings. They screen products against priority hazard lists and provide decision making support for customers and building practitioners.

☑ **Safety Data Sheets** (SDS) can help building practitioners evaluate the toxicity, hazards, ecological information, and disposal considerations for products specified in projects. An SDS must be provided by suppliers of hazardous products at the time of sale. Section 3 of an SDS provides information on hazardous ingredients (such as heavy metals, carcinogens, and ozone-depleting compounds) and Section 9 can be checked for any VOC content.

Action plan

- ☐ **Request and read** EPDs, HPDs, and SDSs for materials found at your jobsite.
- ☐ **Discuss** commonly used materials with suppliers, peers, and specifiers. See if there are product alternatives that provide better environmental or health outcomes.



Did You Know?

Many building certifications such as [LEED](#) and [Built Green Canada](#) rely on documentation such as EPDs and HPDs for compliance. Trades businesses can use these documents to better support project teams, identify lower-impact products, and strengthen their competitiveness in building projects through expert product knowledge.

Want to Know More?

[What is an Environmental Product Declaration?](#)

[HPD Collaborative: How to read an HPD in 6 easy steps.](#)

Purchasing and Products: Sustainable Materials Certifications

There are plenty of sustainable materials certifications available in the market, each offering a different perspective on sustainable choices. On jobsites and within project specifications, sustainable materials certifications are increasingly being used to verify product sustainability claims. They are often required to achieve whole-of-building certifications. Knowing what assurance is provided by sustainable materials certifications enables conversations with customers, suppliers, and staff about the environmental, social, and health impacts of product choices.

Key information

- ☑ [Forest Stewardship Council \(FSC\)](#) certified products provide assurance that wood and paper products come from responsible sources and are verified to meet environmental and social standards.
- ☑ [UL ECOLOGO](#) certification verifies products for environmental and health impacts across their full lifecycle. Materials are considered for recycled and biobased content used, their packaging, and how material inputs are sourced. Certified products are commonly found in sealants, adhesives, paint removers, HVAC systems, and household appliances.
- ☑ [UL GREENGUARD](#) certification demonstrates compliance for products that limit airborne chemical exposure for people in indoor settings. It focuses on testing and reporting on Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) present in furniture, flooring, cleaning, and interior building products. The certification aims to improve indoor air quality in homes, offices, schools, and other indoor environments.
- ☑ [EnerGuide](#) ratings provide verified data about a product's energy performance. The ratings show annual energy consumption in kilowatt hours (kWh) and an indicator to show how the product compares to others in the same class.

Action plan

- ☐ Research the sustainable materials certifications **most relevant** to your work. Visit the websites of certification schemes to understand what they are evaluating and how they operate.
- ☐ Ask **suppliers and industry peers** about the certifications they use and why.
- ☐ **Talk to your customers** about the benefits of sustainable materials certifications and how they can be applied in their projects.



Did You Know?

The average person [spends about 90% of their time indoors](#). Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is important to consider during new builds and renovations as it can significantly affect the health and wellbeing of building occupants.

Purchasing and Products: Green Building Certifications

Green building certifications offer an assurance that a building has been designed and built to meet certain environmental, energy, social, and health standards. They are typically voluntary standards that demonstrate achievement in sustainable practices. Pursuing a green building certification can reduce operational costs and energy use, command higher property values and rents, and improve occupant health and wellbeing. The green building certification process can, however, add time and cost to projects and can add an element of design inflexibility due to certification requirements.

Key Information

- ☑ [LEED](#) (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a globally recognized standard for sustainable practices in buildings.
- ☑ [Built Green](#) is a nationally operated sustainable building certification covering energy efficiency, natural resources, pollution reduction, and air quality.
- ☑ [Passive House](#) is an internationally recognized and exceptionally energy-efficient building standard that reduces energy demand through carefully designed buildings and airtight construction.
- ☑ [CBHA Net Zero](#) is focused on energy performance. Complying homes produce as much energy as they consume in a year.

Action Plan

- ☐ **Research green building certifications** most relevant to your work.
- ☐ **Ask suppliers** and industry peers about the certifications they use and why.
- ☐ **Talk to your customers** about the benefits of green building certifications and how they can be applied in their projects.

Did You Know?

The materials used to construct buildings can account for a significant portion of a building's lifetime carbon footprint.

Case Study

When the City of Vancouver reintroduced a floor area incentive for [zero-emission and low embodied carbon](#) projects, the owners at this Dunbar property selected [Passive House](#) as a mechanism to ensure the project would qualify. Following an integrated design process including the designer/builder and energy advisor, the project is on track to deliver energy efficient and spacious living for the occupants.



Image credit: [Lanefab](#)

"All trades have an important role to play in constructing high-performing buildings. The general contractor needs to understand the requirements and be able to translate them to trades onsite, especially when it comes to airtightness. I've seen projects select an 'air boss' whose role is to ensure the airtightness requirements are met."

Elisabeth Baudinaud, Founder & Principal,
[Carbon Wise](#).

Climate Action: Building Green Trades Capacity

The green building sector is experiencing significant growth in B.C. and is expected to continue to grow over the next decade driven by policies such as the [BC Energy Step Code](#) and the [Zero Carbon Step Code](#). Developing staff with knowledge and experience in green building practices can support a trades business' sustainability goals and enhance its market competitiveness. Individualized learning plans for staff can be developed that align employee interests and career development with business goals. Lifelong learning and continuing professional development (CPD) ensure that staff can confidently deliver to the job at hand and adapt to meet new industry practices and requirements.

Key Information

- ☑ Many [green building certifications](#) offer training programs and **microcredentials**. As an example, [LEED](#) offers a [LEED Green Associate](#) credential to demonstrate an understanding of green building principles.
- ☑ [Synergy Foundation](#) offers **online courses** in topics such as the [Circular Economy](#) and [Greening Trades](#).
- ☑ [TradeUpBC](#) connects tradespeople to training programs and microcredentials, including **online options**.
- ☑ [Canada's Building Trades Unions \(CBTU\)](#) offers an online [Building It Green](#) 2.5hr **foundational course**.
- ☑ **Individualized learning plans** with staff can help align career development objectives with business goals.

Action Plan

- ☐ Research the **training available** for [green building certifications](#) that are most relevant to your work.
- ☐ Review the **resources** from [Synergy Foundation](#), [TradeUpBC](#), and [CBTU](#) to see which are most relevant for your business.
- ☐ Meet with staff to understand their **individual learning interests**, career development, and direction.

Quiz: What is one benefit of developing individualized learning plans?

- A. They reduce the need for formal certification
- B. They align employee interests and career development with business goals
- C. They eliminate the need for continuing professional development
- D. The same learning plan can easily be used across all staff



Check your answer on page 27.

Did You Know?

In B.C. there are already approx. 80,000 green building jobs. This is expected to increase to more than 97,000 by 2030.

Climate Action: Measuring Emissions

A carbon footprint shows the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that a trades business produces, both directly, like fuel used in work vehicles and equipment, and indirectly, like electricity used at the office and jobsites. Measurement starts with collecting and managing emissions data. Useful data can often be found from utility invoices (e.g. electricity, gas, water), mileage records, and receipts (e.g. waste collection, flights, fuel).

Key Information

- ☑ Measuring emissions provides a **baseline to track improvements** over time and demonstrates the results of sustainability efforts. Even a simple estimate can provide a valuable insight into a business and help guide decision making.
- ☑ Practical tools are available to **track and manage emissions** data, from spreadsheet templates to online software platforms.

Action Plan

- ☐ **Connect** with your bank and accountant to see what emissions tools they recommend for managing emissions data.
- ☐ **Try out** some calculators and tools to become familiar with the measuring process. Examples include: [SME Climate Hub's Small Business Carbon Calculator](#), [Breeze](#), [Greenly's Quick Carbon Calculator](#), and [Vancity's emissions workbook](#).
- ☐ Enrol in a **short course** to build an understanding of emissions measurement. [Arizona State University](#) offers an online course on [Greenhouse Gas Accounting](#).

Did You Know?

UBC Sauder's [Centre for Climate and Business Solutions](#) offers a [Climate Clinic](#) for SMEs to measure their carbon footprint. Businesses can receive support to understand their emissions, assess climate risk, and identify pathways to net-zero.

Case Study

When [UCS Forest Group](#) needed its first comprehensive emissions baseline, they called on UBC Sauder [Centre for Climate and Business Solutions](#) to deliver. Two student analysts worked with UCS Forest Group over four months to deliver a facility-level emissions assessment across 18 North American sites. Their assessment served as a critical starting point for reduction efforts. Beyond the baseline, the student analysts developed a standardized calculation template to consistently track emissions.



"It was inspiring to see how driven UCS Forest Group and their employees were to advance sustainability. It showed me how some corporations can be deeply committed to social impact beyond regulatory compliance." Cindy Ho, UBC Sauder student specializing in Global Supply Chain and Logistics Management.

Case Study credit: UBC Sauder [Centre for Climate and Business Solutions](#), read the [full story here](#).

Climate Action: Reducing and Offsetting Emissions

Prerequisite: Ensure there is a measurement baseline for emissions in your trades business before considering ways to reduce and offset emissions. See the [Measuring Emissions](#) section.

Reducing and offsetting emissions helps trades businesses cut their carbon footprint. Key emissions sources to consider are direct emissions from vehicle fleets and on-site machinery, and indirect emissions from electricity use and materials consumption.

Prioritizing ways to cut emissions in everyday operations is generally more effective than relying on offsets. Reducing emissions at the source can often save both time and money through efficiency gains. Offsetting emissions can reduce an overall carbon footprint and support environmentally friendly projects, however it adds ongoing costs and does not address the underlying activities that generate emissions.

Key Information

- ☑ Understanding a trades business' carbon footprint will identify high-emission activities and **highlight opportunities for lower-emission alternatives**. This could include fleet and tool electrification.
- ☑ There are often **financial incentives** applicable for reducing emissions in business operations, including tax credits, grants, rebates, and low-interest finance.

Action Plan

- ☐ Once an emissions report is available (see [Measuring Emissions](#) section), **review it** to understand which are the highest-emission activities.
- ☐ Consider how overall **travel requirements** could be reduced in your operations.
- ☐ Research available **financial incentives** for lowering emissions in your business. Great places to start include: [CleanBC](#), [BC Hydro](#), [Fortis BC](#), and your bank.
- ☐ Research available **offset programs** such as [Veritree](#) and [Less Emissions](#).
- ☐ Consider offsetting programs in areas that are near to your business so the offset **benefits the local environment**.

Quiz: What is generally most effective for reducing a trades business' carbon footprint?

- A. Relying on carbon offset programs
- B. Reducing emissions at the source
- C. Increasing electricity consumption
- D. Purchasing additional machinery



Check your answer on page 27.

Did You Know?

[Veritree](#) offers a carbon offset program that supports the protection of the Great Bear Rainforest. In addition to helping offset emissions, it supports wildlife habitat and biodiversity outcomes.

Social: Employee Health and Wellness Programs

Employee Health and Wellness programs help create a positive work culture that benefits staff and employers alike. Promoting healthy living can boost morale and productivity, prevent injuries and sickness, and aid top talent recruitment and retention. Applied thoughtfully, Employee Health and Wellness programs can build strong teams and improve job engagement.

Key Information

- ☑ Programs can cover **physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial** wellbeing. Ideally, a program will cover more than just one aspect, but it's ok to start with one and extend to more later.
- ☑ **Examples** of programs can include gym reimbursements, healthy snacks, and commuting allowances.
- ☑ **Employee benefits plans** can contribute to programs through extended health and dental coverage, employee assistance, retirement savings, and insurance.
- ☑ Simple yet effective ideas such as walking meetings, flexible work times, **social events**, and regular check ins can support a healthier workplace.

Action Plan

- ☐ Ask employees what their health and wellness **priorities** are.
- ☐ Research **resources** in your community. They could include social fitness, active commuting, or activity groups.
- ☐ Review your **employee benefits plan** to ensure it's working for your business.
- ☐ Provide posters, promote initiatives in meetings, and **lead by example** through attendance at organized events.

Did You Know?

The [Tailgate Toolkit](#) offers tools designed to support pain management and reduce harm relating to substance use in the construction sector.

Case Study

[Green Island Builders](#) created a “wellness” group chat for staff to share upcoming events and encourage each other in their wellness activities. Staff regularly share activities such as volunteer days, yoga, 5km runs, mindfulness programs, and social events like BBQs. The program rewards staff participation in sustained new wellness activities and for organizing social events.



“Our wellness program was created in response to the tradespeople I was seeing suffering in isolation. It encourages our staff to try out new activities, organize social events, and volunteer in the community.”
Martin Scaia, Managing Director, [Green Island Builders](#).

Want to Know More?

[BCCA Employee Benefit Trust resources.](#)

Social: Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Trades

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in trades businesses creates respectful and safe working environments that attract, retain, and elevate underrepresented groups. DEI initiatives can benefit trades businesses with improved access to skilled tradespeople and new perspectives that lead to improved practices. DEI initiatives can lead to better service for customers, through values alignment and representation. There are many free and low-cost resources available for trades businesses to start or extend a DEI initiative.

Key Information

- ☑ Creating a respectful and **safe working environment** is a core part of any DEI initiative. The [Builders Code](#) offers guidance, policy templates, and training to maintain a safe and inclusive workplace culture.
- ☑ Behaviour at the jobsite is **significantly influenced by owners**, managers, and supervisors. When leaders model inclusive behaviour, it's noticed by staff and becomes the expectation on site. Ensure leaders are trained to promote an **inclusive workplace culture** and address any problematic behaviour quickly.

Action Plan

- ☐ Review **hiring processes** to ensure fair treatment, support accessibility needs, and address unconscious biases.
- ☐ **Attend** a short course to understand how to shape positive worksite behaviour. The [Builders Code](#) offers a 3-hour [Effective Leadership Training](#) course.
- ☐ Create a **code of conduct** to establish standards for behaviour at your workplace. As an example, the [Builders Code](#) offers a [free acceptable worksite policy template](#).
- ☐ Research **resources** for supporting underrepresented groups in trades. The [BC Centre for Women in the Trades](#) maintains a [comprehensive resource list](#).

Case Study

The [Builders Code](#) is a “by construction for construction” organization available to guide DEI activities including policy templates, training, and HR support. Understanding the pressures of trade businesses, the [Builders Code](#) offers tangible ways to lead by example and address biases in the sector, building a foundation for positive worksite culture.



“When people feel respected and safe to speak up, it can reduce business risk and improve worker retention.” Diane Jolicoeur, Workplace Culture Advisor, [Builders Code](#).

Did You Know?

Industry estimates expect [54,000 additional construction workers](#) will be needed in B.C. over the next 10 years.

Social: Encouraging Aspiring Tradespeople

Encouraging aspiring tradespeople to take the next step in their careers is a meaningful way for trades businesses to support the trades sector. Engaging with aspiring tradespeople can improve recruitment access to motivated and emerging skilled workers. Trades businesses can support the development of aspiring tradespeople by hosting apprentices, participating in mentorship programs, and attending career fairs.

Key Information

- ☑ Taking on an **apprentice** can directly build skills and capacity within the workplace. Apprentices bring recent learnings from the classroom, familiarity with new technologies, motivation, and diverse perspectives to the workplace.
- ☑ Providing **mentorship** for a tradesperson can strengthen the trades sector as well as contributing to your own professional and personal development. Some programs offer free training for mentors with no prior experience needed.
- ☑ Participating in **career fairs** can boost the profile of your trades business and start conversations with emerging skilled workers. It can position your trades business as an employer of choice for aspiring tradespeople.

Action Plan

- ☐ Consider [hiring an apprentice](#) to **add capacity** and fresh thinking in your business.
- ☐ Ensure your workplace is a [suitable learning environment](#) for an aspiring tradesperson.
- ☐ Consider becoming a **mentor** to strengthen your trade. [Building Builders](#) is a great place to start.
- ☐ Connect with a **local training provider** to participate in upcoming careers fairs and events. [SkilledTradesBC](#) offers a [list of approved training providers](#).

Case Study

Mentorship played an important role in shaping Barbara (Malidzas) James' career in the trades. A conversation with a BCIT instructor when she was a 3rd year carpentry apprentice was formative in Barbara choosing to work as an instructor herself. A highlight of her career journey since has been teaching Indigenous youth high-performance trade skills during a [deep retrofit of cabins](#) at the Cheakamus Centre.



"Having early mentorship support helped steer my career away from the concrete formwork I was doing towards work I'm passionate about, like mass timber projects and [Zero Energy Buildings](#)." Barbara (Malidzas) James, Instructor, BCIT.

Did You Know?

A single conversation can influence an aspiring tradesperson's career choice. Many apprentices report that a mentor, employer, teacher, or industry event played a key role in introducing them to the trades.

Quiz Answers

Waste: Composting Organics (pg. 7)

Which action helps ensure proper handling of organic waste on a worksite?

Correct answer: C. Incorporating organic waste topics into regular site meetings

Transport: Getting to the Office, Workshop, or Showroom (pg. 14)

Cycling is an ideal transport option for which type of commute?

Correct answer: B. Commutes less than 5 km

Climate Action: Building Green Trades Capacity (pg. 21)

What is one benefit of developing individualized learning plans?

Correct answer: B. They align employee interests and career development with business goals

Climate Action: Reducing and Offsetting Emissions (pg. 23)

What is generally most effective for reducing a trades business' carbon footprint?

Correct answer: B. Reducing emissions at the source

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