



# **CONTRACTOR'S COMMITMENT**

to sustainable building practices

## **2021**

# Contractor's Commitment 2021

## FOREWORD

Contractors are uniquely positioned to impact the sustainability of building projects. In preconstruction, contractors impact the design of a building by providing feedback to designers and clients. They influence product and material selection through the submittal process. Finally, contractors control how a project gets built, including the equipment that's used, how construction waste is managed, and the extent of surrounding site and landscape disturbance.

Over time, some construction companies have recognized their influence and developed their own sustainability policies. However, there was no agreed upon framework for where to start or for identifying best practices. Different companies have developed different ways of tracking and calculating similar metrics, obscuring progress in the construction industry.

The Sustainable Construction Leaders created the Contractor's Commitment to fill this gap. Launched as a pilot program for 2021, the guidelines are intended to set a sustainability benchmark specific to the construction industry, providing uniformity in reporting sustainability performance. They are also intended to be an entry point for any company, regardless of where they are in their sustainability journey or type of construction, and to evolve as users provide feedback.

The guidelines are publicly available for any contractor to apply. All contractors can review these guidelines, make their best faith effort to implement them, and then provide feedback. Companies may also formally sign on to the Commitment for public recognition or join the Sustainable Construction Leaders Network for a bigger voice in this initiative.

The Sustainable Construction Leaders peer network is comprised of the most committed sustainability directors from leading construction companies throughout North America.

The core purpose of the Sustainable Construction Leaders peer network is to build a national community with regional ties that shares best practices, advocates for, and inspires change in a way that is collaborative, non-competitive, trusting, positive, and results-oriented so that we leverage the construction industry to combat climate change and create healthy environments.

## HOW TO USE THE CONTRACTOR'S COMMITMENT

The guidelines will be updated periodically and cover five categories:

- Carbon Reduction
- Jobsite Wellness
- Waste Management
- Water Management
- Materials

Within each category, a guideline may have up to three tiers: good, better, and best. If a guideline has multiple tiers, the practices of the lower tiers must be implemented before qualifying for the higher tiers. The guidelines are structured this way to clearly identify potential next steps for a contractor seeking improvement.

The Contractor's Commitment may be used as a resource to guide internal company initiatives. If used only as an internal set of guidelines, no additional steps are required.

However, if a company wishes to credibly and publicly state that it is implementing the Contractor's Commitment, gain public recognition for following it, or make a stronger statement to which it can hold itself accountable, that company must make a best faith effort to apply the guidelines to 30% of company projects by dollar volume. The company may choose which tier to pursue in each category, but each category must be attempted at the 'good' level or higher.

Publicly committed companies must sign this document and upload it per the directions on the BuildingGreen website (facilitators of the Sustainable Construction Leaders network) each time the Contractor Sustainability Guidelines are periodically updated. Companies may sign up as one entity, or if preferred, as individual regional offices.

They also must annually upload a reporting template to BuildingGreen and qualified companies are highly encouraged to [join the network](#) to learn from the experience of other participating firms. Tracking will begin in January 2021.

Reported information will not be publicly disclosed by BuildingGreen in a way that can be traced to specific companies, although some tiers require a company disclose certain information publicly. For example, the "best" tier in the carbon category requires companies to publish emissions data at a publicly accessible location. Committed companies will be publicly recognized on the BuildingGreen website.

The Sustainable Construction Leaders network will determine when and how the Contractor Sustainability Guidelines are modified and updated. This pilot launch will allow the Sustainable Construction Leaders to collect valuable information towards improving the commitment for the 2022 calendar year. To learn more about the Contractor's Commitment, [click here](#).

To view the Contractor's Commitment, read ahead.

## CARBON REDUCTION

The goal of this category is to outline practices that General Contractors can implement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (“carbon”) from our construction activities and our corporate operations and to advocate for greenhouse gas reductions by our partners and suppliers. The best management practices (BMP) outlined in this category generally align with three themes:

- Plan, Implement and Advocate
- Track and Reduce
- Report and Disclose

### Good

#### Plan, Implement, Advocate

1. Implement a company-wide anti-idling plan.
2. Request (but not require) that suppliers and subcontractors provide Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for their products.

#### Track and Reduce GHG Emissions

1. Track the following Scope 1 Emissions (Direct Emissions):
  - a. Fossil Fuel purchases for General Contractor Owned, Leased, or Rented Mobile Equipment Emissions (Corporate Operations).
  - b. General Contractor Owned, Leased, or Rented Stationary Emissions (Offices).
  - c. Refrigerant recapture from decommissioned equipment in demo.
2. Track the following Scope 2 Emissions (Purchased Electricity, Steam or Heat):
  - a. General Contractor-purchased utilities for corporate offices.
    - i. The fossil fuel component of the electricity used for corporate offices; steam used for corporate offices.
3. Track the following Scope 3 Emissions (General Contractor Corporate Travel):
  - a. Track emissions from air, rail, and bus travel to/from conferences and/or professional events.
  - b. Company reimbursed fuel purchases for private vehicles.
  - c. This does not include emissions from company owned vehicles or emissions for employee commuting.

#### Report and Disclose

1. Report internally within your company as a tool to raise awareness and determine needed actions to reduce impact.

### Better

#### Plan, Implement, Advocate

1. Prohibit the use of Engine Tier 2 (and lower) equipment on all job sites.
2. Use the Embodied Carbon in Construction Calculator (EC3) software or other embodied carbon accounting software to model the carbon impact of materials.
3. Ask (but not require) suppliers to provide information on their greenhouse gas reduction efforts related to their business and manufacturing operations.

#### Track and Reduce GHG Emissions Category

1. Track the following Scope 1 Emissions (Direct Emissions):
  - a. General Contractor mobile emissions from Construction equipment (job sites).
    - i. Examples: earthwork equipment; fossil-fuel powered forklifts etc.
  - b. General Contractor Owned or Rented Stationary Emissions (Job sites).
2. Track the following Scope 2 Job Site Emissions (Purchased Electricity, Steam or Heat):
  - a. The fossil fuel component of electricity, steam or thermal energy used at jobsites.
3. Track the following Scope 3 Emissions (Subcontractor Emissions):
  - a. Subcontractor-owned or rented mobile emissions from Construction equipment (Job sites).

## Offset

1. Offset all the General Contractor's Scope 1 Impacts.

## Report and Disclose

1. Report out company-identifiable results to the SCL Group annually. Results are not shared or published outside the SCL Group.

## Best

### Plan, Implement, Advocate

1. Only Engine Tier 4 final equipment on all job sites.
2. Use the EC3 software or other embodied carbon accounting software to model the carbon impact of materials.
3. Publicly support legislative action on carbon reduction on a state and national level.

### Track and Reduce GHG Emissions

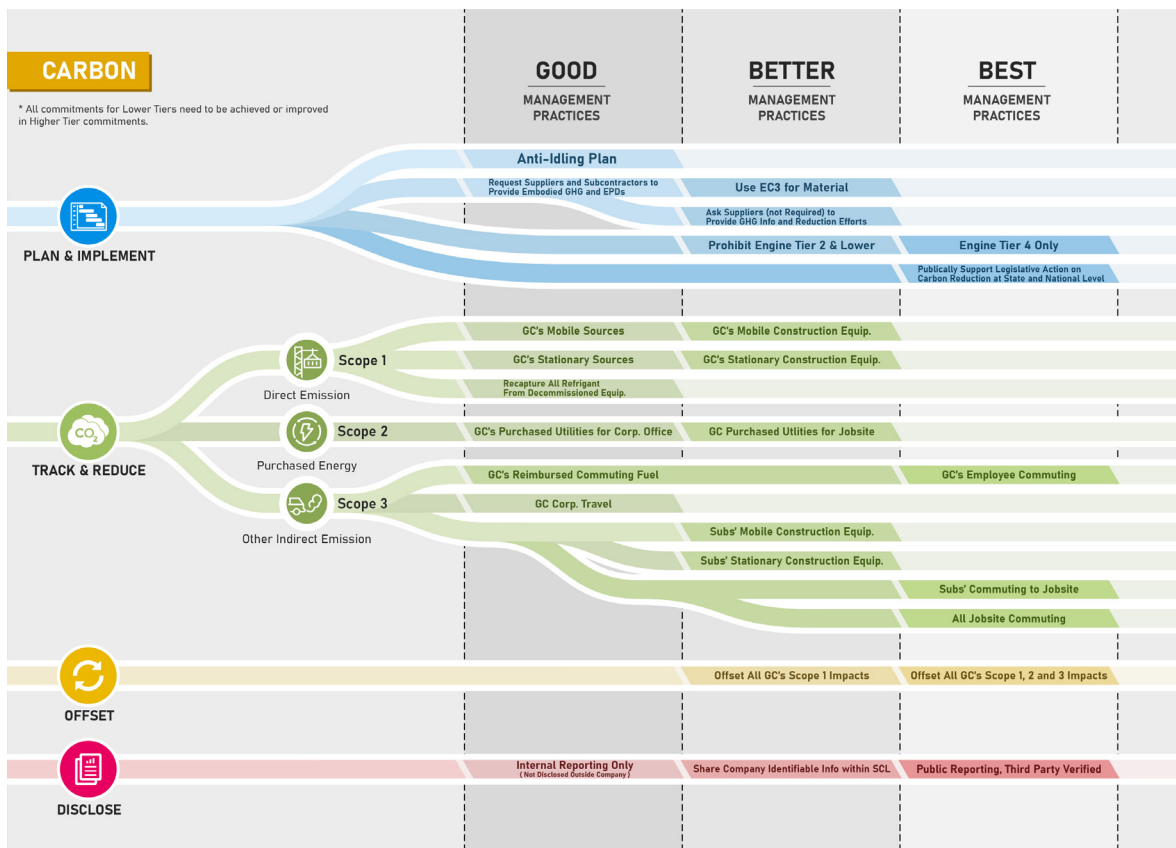
1. Track the following Scope 1 Emissions (Direct Emissions):
  - a. All job site deliveries.
2. Track the following Scope 3 Emissions (Commuting by General Contractor employees and subcontractor employees):
  - a. Commuting to/from jobsites in vehicles not owned/rented by the general contractor (i.e. employee-owned cars and trucks).
  - b. Commuting to/from jobsites by subcontractors – both company vehicles owned by the subcontractor and subcontractor employee-owned vehicles.

## Offset

1. Offset all the General Contractor's Scope 1, 2 and 3 Impacts.

## Report and Disclose

1. Publish emissions data at a publicly accessible location (i.e. corporate or third-party website). All data must be third party verified.



## JOBSITE WELLNESS

The goal of this category is to ensure the wellness of a contractor's employees. Jobsites can be dangerous places and the materials that we use to construct buildings can be harmful if not handled properly. This section is designed to help ensure that the sustainability of our buildings does not come at the expense of the health of our employees.

### Good

#### Identify Jobsite Wellness Champion

1. Choose person responsible for wellness activities on the site.

#### Air

1. Indoor Air Quality Management Programs must include factors for trailers and field offices:
  - a. Prohibit smoking – signage on all jobsite entrances.
  - b. Dust mitigation for entrances to jobsite.
  - c. Cleaning Protocol:
    - i. Cleaning supplies must be Green Seal certified.
    - ii. Hand soap must meet one or more of the following standards: EPA safer choice; Green Seal GS-41; UL Ecologo 2784; or soaps with no antimicrobial agents (other than as a preservative) except where required by health codes and other regulations (e.g., food service and health care requirements).
    - iii. Increasing handwashing and sanitation on all jobsites.
      1. Include signage throughout the jobsite and around sanitation stations to wash/sanitize your hands.
  - d. Provide filters and change regularly– in jobsite trailers, AHUs, or negative air machines.

#### Nourishment

1. Provide location for onsite staff to store food.
2. Provide location for onsite staff to eat.
3. Provide healthy food messaging/advertising in the food storage or eating area.
4. Provide hydration messaging/advertising in food and eating areas.
5. Provide access to clean drinking water per OSHA standards.

#### Fitness

1. Remind subcontractors about stretch and flex at every subcontractor coordination meeting.
2. Provide ergonomic suggestions to all jobsite office position work.

#### Mental Wellness

1. Encourage onsite staff to take breaks when needed.
2. Remind onsite staff about EAP offered by company (ex: webinars from healthcare provider).
3. Supporting team members to take PTO or mental health day when needed.

#### Severe Weather Exposure

1. Educate onsite staff about long term sun and heat exposure dangers and severe cold exposure dangers.
2. Provide shade for breaks/lunch in hot weather

### Better

#### Identify Jobsite Wellness Champion

1. Administer wellness survey to company personnel prior to construction to inform efforts in at least two of the following categories:
  - a. Air
  - b. Nourishment
  - c. Fitness

- d. Mental Wellness
- e. Severe Weather Exposure

#### **Air**

1. Pest control policy: provide trashcans with lids for all food waste.
2. Provide air filters with MERV 8 or higher– in jobsite trailers, AHU's, or negative air machines.
3. Cleaning Protocols – daily cleaning for high touch areas for work surfaces and shared spaces.

#### **Nourishment**

1. Provide means for employees to heat food.
2. Provide cutlery: reusable if cleaning available or plant-based cutlery (no plastic).
3. Provide hydration messaging throughout jobsite.

#### **Fitness**

1. Daily stretch and flex (less than 10 minutes daily).
2. Provide secure area to store bikes for commuting.

#### **Mental Wellness**

1. Designated break area away from jobsite or major activity with comfortable, cleanable chair.
2. Within the jobsite office/trailer provide access to nature or natural elements.
3. Provide option to get task lights if requested.

#### **Severe Weather Exposure**

1. Remind onsite staff to wear sunscreen at every subcontractor coordination meeting
2. Provide specific instructions to onsite workers related to exposure (ex: If it is cold bring layers. If it is hot, drink more water).

#### **Best**

##### **Identify Jobsite Wellness Champion**

1. Administer wellness survey to company personnel and trade partners prior to construction to inform efforts in at least four of the following categories:
  - a. Air
  - b. Nourishment
  - c. Fitness
  - d. Mental Wellness
  - e. Severe Weather Exposure
2. Bring in mental health professional on semi-regular basis to check in with project site staff.

#### **Air**

1. Provide air filters with MERV 13 or higher– in jobsite trailers, AHUs, or negative air machines.
2. Monitor IAQ in jobsite trailers/offices during construction on a regular basis/ ongoing.
  - a. At a minimum test for PM 10, PM2.5, CO2.

#### **Nourishment**

1. Encourage healthy food options: dried fruit, nuts, etc.
2. Discourage sugary beverages: no soda or juice with more than 30g of sugar.

#### **Fitness**

1. Provide wearable fitness monitors for at a minimum 10% of field staff - or provide a method to count fitness on mobile devices provided by organization.
2. Internal team meetings to be standing meetings and/or walking meetings.
3. Provide sit/stand desks in jobsite offices and trailers.

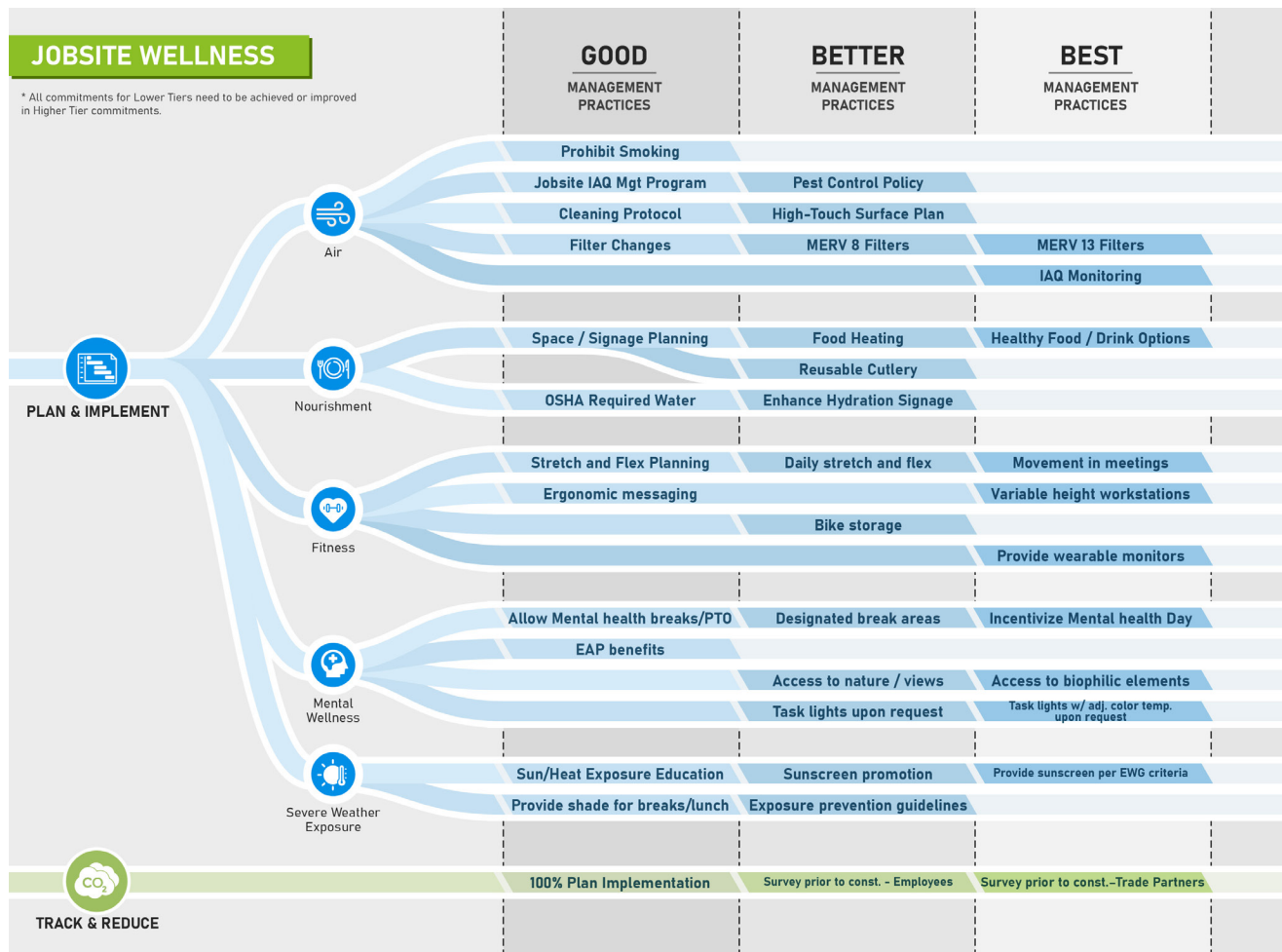
- a. Or provide variation of heights for desks and drawing tables or balance boards and balls for active focus spaces.

### Mental Wellness

1. Encourage/incentivize “mental health day” for field staff.
2. Provide biophilic elements.
3. Provide option to get task lights with adjustable color temperature if requested.

### Severe Weather Exposure

1. Provide sunscreen for onsite staff use that meets Environmental Working Group Criteria.



## WASTE MANAGEMENT

The goal of this category is to outline steps General Contractors can take to minimize construction and demolition waste and maximize waste diversion. It is understood that each construction project is unique, and project-specific waste management plans are required to ensure success on a project-by-project basis.

### **Good**

#### Diversion Rate

1. Projects will strive to divert a minimum of 50% of construction waste. Exclude Alternative Daily Cover (ADC).
2. When recycling rates without ADC are not available, divert construction waste at 65%.



3. Create at least two waste streams that divert material from landfill, one of which can be to a materials recycling facility. The second could be source separation of a particular material.

### **Waste Planning**

1. Incorporate waste diversion rate goals into the estimating process. Include:
  - a. Hauling, hauling frequency, bins, and signage
  - b. Additional labor for source separation
2. Coordinate with nearby waste facilities to confirm they can accept C&D waste material and recycle at a rate that will maximize waste diversion.

### **Practices, on-site infrastructure for offsite sorting**

1. Reduce the number of material source separation dumpsters onsite by scheduling them only for the time needed as indicated by the construction schedule.
2. Projects must display signage to enforce diversion strategies.
3. Communicate to field management and staff that waste diversion is a priority for the project.

### **Waste Tracking**

1. Track all construction waste and demolition waste leaving the site.
2. Retain waste hauler reports for documentation.
3. Advocate for consistency in recycling reporting by asking hauling companies and waste facilities to uniformly track waste diversion. Tracking should include:
  - a. Name of material
  - b. Tonnage for each material
  - c. Recycling rate

## **Better**

### **Diversion Rate**

1. Projects will strive to divert a minimum of 65%. ADC should be excluded from the calculations when possible. If projects are not able to exclude ADC to their calculations a goal of 80% diversion should be set.

### **Waste Planning**

1. Include Construction Waste Management (CWM) plan in bid docs.
2. For projects that include demolition:
  - a. Ask Demo subs to complete their own Demo Waste Management Plan – provide support if needed.
    - i. The plan must demonstrate the understanding of end markets – select demo subs that have a plan to recycle two waste streams.
    - ii. Prioritize for plans that include re-use of products that are salvageable for install on other development projects when possible.
  - b. If salvageable materials are available, work with demo subs to confirm homes for salvageable materials before demo begins.
    - i. Encourage salvaging and donating salvaged material to networks and companies that benefit the community, like Habitat for Humanity.

### **Practices, On-site Infrastructure for Offsite Sorting**

1. Implement waste management kick-off meetings before construction begins to ensure all project team members understand the waste management requirements.

## Waste Tracking

1. Record estimated weight or volume of materials that are reused on site or salvaged for reuse on other projects by subcontractors or vendors.

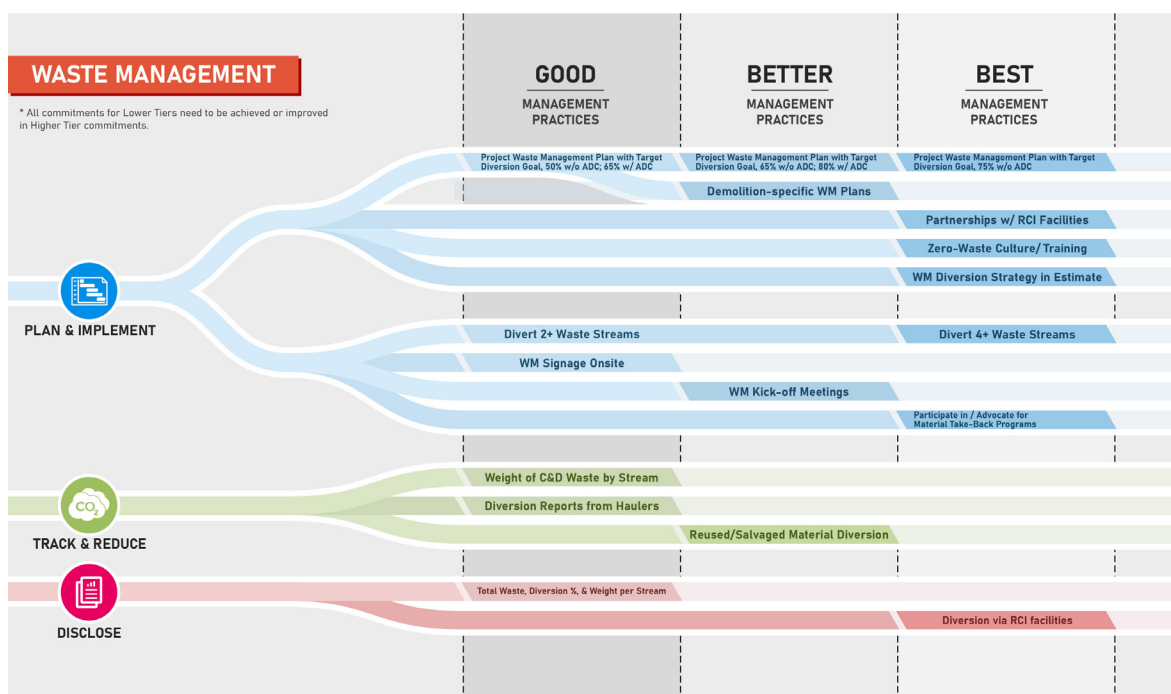
## Best

### Guidelines for Waste Diversion Planning

1. Strive to divert 75% of all construction waste, excluding Alternative Daily Cover (ADC) when possible.
2. Create at least four waste streams that divert material from landfill, one of which can be to a materials recycling facility. The remaining three should be source separation of a particular material.
3. Partner with a Recycling Certification Institute (RCI) verified waste facility to ensure all diversion rates are confirmed by a 3rd party.
  - a. If an RCI facility is not available within a reasonable distance, ask your hauler or recycler how material is being recycled and encourage haulers to use vendors who can show they are recycling responsibly. Then submit an advocacy letter to waste facilities to encourage 3rd party certification.

### Ensure Waste Management and Waste Reduction are Priorities

1. Participate in take-back programs where applicable:
  - a. Carpet, ACT, drywall.
  - b. Advocate for more manufacturers to participate in take back programs.
    - i. Draw from experience to establish which materials should/can participate in these programs.
2. Include the following during the estimating process:
  - a. Deconstruction services (if applicable).
  - b. Cost of take back programs.
3. Project teams must hold waste management kick-off meetings before construction begins to instill a “zero-waste” or “minimal-waste” culture.
  - a. Subs, PMs, and field staff must participate in training.
  - b. Ensure access to waste management requirements.
  - c. Confirm that all necessary parties have taken part in the training (e.g. provide Hard Hat stickers to attendees).



## WATER MANAGEMENT

The goal of this category is to promote responsible use of water. It is understood that each construction project is unique, and project-specific water plans are required to ensure success on a project-by-project basis. This plan has been created to give all contractors an ability to participate in this section of the commitment, regardless of their sphere of influence.

### Good

#### Plan for Responsible Use

1. Identify project-specific water pollution risks & opportunities as part of an overall Project Water Plan (sample Project Water Plan resource provided).
2. Establish appropriate avoidance, mitigation, and controls strategies in compliance with and/or exceeding all local, state, and federal regulations as applicable.
3. Establish a company-wide goal of zero-incidents/fees/fines and measure and report annually.

### Better

#### Use Water Wisely

1. Identify project-specific water use risks & opportunities and targeted reduction strategies as part of an overall Project Water Plan (sample Project Water Plan resource provided).
2. Prior to construction, conduct a project water use and reduction planning/collaboration session with key trade partners and stakeholders.
3. Develop an internal checklist for monitoring and managing onsite water use.
4. Document and share best practices internally and externally.

### Best

#### Restore Water

1. Develop a project-specific or company-wide plan to offset estimated impacts of construction water use for all projects (e.g. Regional certifications such as Salmon-Safe Contractor, Water Restoration Credit purchases, etc.).
2. Explore and establish local partnerships beyond the jobsite related to water (e.g. Team education sessions or volunteer opportunities).
3. Document and share best practices internally and externally.

WATER		GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	BETTER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
* All commitments for Lower Tiers need to be achieved or improved in Higher Tier commitments.				
 PLAN & IMPLEMENT	Evaluate Water Pollution Risks & Opportunities	Evaluate Water Use Risk & Opportunity	Water Restoration	
	Avoidance, Mitigation & Controls Strategies	Water Use Reduction Strategies	Partnerships and Education	
 TRACK & REDUCE	Incidents/Fees/Fines	Best Practices		
 OFFSET			Construction Water Use Water Restoration Offsets	
 DISCLOSE	Internal Only	Case Study w/ SCL	Case Study w/ SCL kGal Offset	

# MATERIAL SELECTION

The goal of this category is to outline steps General Contractors can take to advance the uptake of healthy and sustainable materials on projects. Each contractor has varying levels of influence with materials, from almost no control with bid-build, to moderate control with self-perform, and significant control with design-build projects.

Definition: Healthy and Sustainable Materials are those that minimize adverse impacts on human health and ecological systems while promoting social equity and transparency regarding their ingredients and impacts. Healthy Materials are, as much as possible, harmless during their manufacture, installation, application, operation, maintenance and end of life processes.

## Good

1. Commit to improving selection of materials via a healthy and sustainable materials policy statement.
2. Participate in an SCL survey to establish a baseline regarding your firm's sphere of influence with materials within your operations.
3. Provide education and training around healthy and sustainable materials to internal decision makers such as estimating, operation, procurement.

## Better

1. Implement a strategy to identify and replace at least two materials types, by project, with healthier and more sustainable materials.
2. Implement a framework to preserve the healthy and sustainable materials policy during substitution, value engineering, and standard procurement.
3. Provide education and outreach around healthy and sustainable materials to at least 5 subcontractors, vendors, or design teams.

## Best

1. Implement a strategy to identify and replace at least two materials types, firm wide, with healthier and more sustainable materials.
2. Demonstrate outcomes of at least 5 examples of working in partnership with design teams, subcontractors, or materials suppliers to implement healthy high performing materials.
3. Share your experience publicly as an educational tool for others, examples would be case-study, speaking opportunities, website

