



Zero Waste
Alliance

Companies on the Path to Zero Waste:



Collins & Aikman
Floorcoverings
Dalton, GA

Collins & Aikman Floorcoverings, (C&A) strives for a closed loop in their production of floor coverings. C&A has reduced large amounts of waste by closing the manufacturing loop. From 1993 to 2000, C&A increased their production by 91%. C&A continued to improve their manufacturing operations so that even with increased production, they reduced energy usage by 28 % per square yard, green house gas emissions by 28 % per square yard, water usage by 50 % per square yard, and air emissions by 89 % per square yard.

C&A's closed loop production involves using recycled materials in their product. In the early 1990s, C&A set a goal to recycle carpet into carpet. Today, C&A has realized that goal. In 1999, C&A utilized over 5,000 tons of recycled material in production of its floorcoverings, and over 6,500 tons in 2000. C&A is able to recycle any vinyl backed carpet regardless of the original manufacturer. Examples of products with recycled content include Repeat® nylon 6,6 yarn, which contains a minimum of 82% recycled content, and ER3 backing with 100% recycled content. Overall product recycled content ranges from 31-52%. C&A has also reduced the usage of materials in their carpet by producing products with 20% less yarn than the industry's average. This saves the company enough yarn to produce an additional 3.6 million square yards of carpet annually. C&A products with recycled materials perform as well, if not better, than similarly constructed virgin products. By reducing their use of raw materials, C&A has saved several million dollars over the past five years.

C&A also recycles materials to divert them from being landfilled. Since 1993 waste has been reduced by 84% per square yard through source reduction and recycling. All manufacturing waste is closed loop recycled into ER3 carpet backing for new floor coverings. Other items that are recycled include paper products, cardboard, pallets, light bulbs, batteries, carpet cores and yarn tubes. In the early 1990s, 0.85 pounds of waste were landfilled per square yard of product. That figure is now less than .06 pounds (i.e. less than 1 ounce) per square yard. Through all of their recycling, C&A has, to date, recycled over 23,000 tons of waste, which has saved an estimated \$1 million in landfill fees.

C&A also purchases recycled materials to ensure a demand for recycled products. Recycled materials purchased include recycled polyethylene, recycled automotive vinyl, recycled nylon 6,6, recycled content paper and office supplies and packaging materials such as boxes and cores for carpets and buckets for installation products. Since 1993, C&A has purchased recycled products containing over 14 million pounds of recycled material.

C&A's efforts have been recognized by the EPA in the EPA Private Sector Pioneers study "How Companies are Incorporating Environmentally preferable Purchasing."

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