

## Sustainability Brief: ReEntry: The Interface Reclamation Program

### Through ReEntry, Interface guarantees that reclaimed carpet products will not end up in a landfill.

**ReEntry** is the Interface carpet reclamation program. Since the program's inception in 1994, the Interface family of companies has diverted more than 3,000,000 yards of carpet from landfills. It's important to note that reclamation is merely one component in the path to sustainability. Interface also works closely with the team at Interface Research Corporation to plan for reclamation during the design phase – creating a holistic approach toward carpet reclamation before the carpet ever reaches the floor.

Taking a holistic approach means that we evaluate the product type and condition, as well as its location for transportation purposes. This allows us to determine the best option for processing your product(s) - i.e. recycling, upcycling, downcycling or repurposing.

**Recycling** is turning waste materials into new materials of the same value, such as vinyl backing into vinyl backing.

**Upcycling** involves turning waste materials into more valuable products. For example, using waste PET (plastic from soda bottles) to create Terratex panel fabric.

**Downcycling** creates less valuable products from waste materials. Turning nylon face fiber into car parts or carpet padding, including nylon face fiber in recycled backings, or using carpet for waste-to-energy are good examples of downcycling.

**Repurposing** allows a product to be reused by an organization or individual. Interface currently donates used carpeting to charities and other non-profit organizations.

While there is a variety of options available, some are less than optimal and most entail costs greater than simply landfilling. At Interface, we seek solutions that are environmentally conscious first and foremost. Secondly, we analyze the economic impact, including fees associated with separating and processing materials, as well as the cost of bailing and shipping reclaimed products to their final destination. If the cost of energy and fuel to recycle a product is greater than the value of the original product, other alternatives should be considered.

**Vinyl Backed Carpets** - Interface is eager to reclaim vinyl backed carpets to provide feed stock for our GlasBac® RE high recycled content backing. When reclaiming vinyl backed carpet, Interface first evaluates

the type and condition to determine whether or not the backing components can be used for GlasBac RE.

If it meets GlasBac RE quality standards, the backing is separated from the face fiber via grinding and a separation process. The separated backing material is then made into a sheet that is incorporated as one layer of the finished GlasBac RE backing. All Interface products with GlasBac RE have a total recycled content of no less than 40% with a minimum of 20% post-consumer recycled content.

If the carpet can be reused, it may be donated to a charity and "repurposed." When neither of these options are available, the carpet goes waste-to-energy.

In a fully sustainable environment, all materials would be recycled back into the manufacturing loop to create new products using renewable energy for transportation and processes.

**Other Carpet Types** - The scientists at Interface Research Corporation and Interface Flooring Systems are working to develop new backing materials that can be easily recycled back into the original material, as well as methods to recycle other existing backing types and nylon from the face construction. But for now, these other backing types, and both Nylon 6 and Nylon 6,6 can either be downcycled into other products or used for waste-to-energy processes.

Through the waste-to-energy process, carpet is heated in a forced-air furnace to create steam. A generator turns the steam into electricity for the community, and reduces the use of fossil fuels. These facilities are very efficient, and closely monitored for low emissions. Although waste to energy is not our preferred solution, it is a better option than putting carpet into landfills, and it serves as an interim solution for traditional broadloom carpet and non-recyclable carpet tile.

Again, recycling is merely one component and solution to the larger problem. None of us is there yet, but Interface is dedicated to finding alternative methods to reduce the impact of floorcovering products and processes on our biosphere and environment. We invite you to join us on our journey to sustainability. To learn more, contact your local Interface Flooring Systems Account Executive. Or contact Interface Americas Sustainable Services at 1.888.REENTRE (733.6873).