

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Success Story

These Tires Were Made for Walkin'

Los Angeles County, California, has recently discovered the beauty and utility of old tires. Plagued by 10 million waste tires a year, the county has successfully saved landfill space by recycling tire rubber into pathways, playground surfaces, and flooring tile throughout its district.

The project began in 1999 when Los Angeles County partnered with Sears Auto Center to sponsor its first of many waste tire collection days, encouraging residents to recycle old tires free of charge. The county transported more than 500 waste tires collected that day to a recycling facility where they were shredded into crumb rubber. This practical material was turned into a playground mat for Arnold Elementary School in the city of Torrance. Not only did the new playground material offer superior protection against falls, but it reminded students and teachers every day of the benefits of recycled products. The county was so pleased with Arnold's playground material that it installed crumb rubber mats into two other elementary schools later in the week.

More recently, in 2001, the county undertook a large-scale project to further display the benefits of recycled rubber. The county used more than 1,100 old tires to resurface walkways, outdoor floors, and bases of exercise equipment in the Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area of South Central Los Angeles.

Scattered throughout the recreation area are 12 exercise stations, including pull-up and monkey bars and sit-up and push up benches, all used regularly by park patrons. Many exercisers expressed displeasure with wood chips beneath the equipment, prone to flooding and drainage problems during heavy rainstorms. The county addressed these concerns by replacing the mulch with pour-in-place crumb rubber, making the exercise stations accessible in inclement weather and considerably safer. The crumb rubber surface, made from 330 tires, covers nearly 1,300 square feet and provides a flat, slip-free surface with excellent fall protection.

The Senior Citizen Outdoor Shelter is located along the main walking path in Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area and serves as a shaded resting place for weary walkers. Los Angeles

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county installed 3,000 square feet of rubberized flooring tiles throughout the shelter and on the adjacent shuffleboard court, using 300 tires that would have been landfilled. The county also paved a portion of the previously dirt Sam Jones Path with rubberized asphalt. Not only did this upgrade utilize an additional 500 waste tires, but it extended the life of the path, as rubberized asphalt is more durable than conventional asphalt.

Now that it has discovered the benefits of recycled rubber, Los Angeles County plans to continue promoting the use of waste tires in many future projects, helping to increase the post-consumer value of old tires throughout the country.

For more information, visit:

<http://dpw.co.la.ca.us/epd/TireRecycling/RubberMatDemo.cfm#footer>.