Sustainably Reliable

Fuel Source Information | Seattle Steam Biomass Boiler

Clean biomass makes the difference

Burning clean, renewable waste wood results in cleaner emissions. Seattle Steam uses clean urban waste wood as fuel for its biomass boiler; it does not burn garbage, yard waste, trash or plastics. Clean wood debris — wood that is unpainted, not treated with chemical preservatives, and is free of non-combustible materials — includes:

- Broken wood pallets and crates
- Clean construction demolition wood
- Shredded wood from land clearing
- Wood waste from sawmills and chip mills

The company's permit through the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency requires that Seattle Steam establish and enforce a biomass fuel supply monitoring plan designed to prevent delivery of prohibited or restricted materials. Seattle Steam has strict protocols in place to ensure its waste wood is clean, including comprehensive inspections and daily sampling of deliveries from each supplier.

In addition to Seattle Steam's audit of suppliers and daily monitoring of its waste wood supply, each biomass fuel supplier implements its own quality control program — which is in turn audited by Seattle Steam.

The supply pipeline is steady and reliable

Seattle Steam has contracted with a wide range of Washington state suppliers (including wood recyclers, construction and demolition waste processors, land clearing companies and cabinet manufacturers) to provide the waste wood used to fuel its biomass boiler.

No trees are cut to supply fuel; it is all clean urban waste material that is diverted from landfills where, if not managed properly, it can produce harmful methane gas.

At full capacity, Seattle Steam can receive 10-12 truckloads of clean urban waste wood daily, and use approximately 250 tons per day.

Use of biomass is encouraged nationally

The U. S. Department of Energy defines biomass as a substantial renewable fuel resource, and the U.S. Green Building Council recognizes wood as a renewable fuel source in the newest version of its LEED rating system.