EUROPEAN TYRE RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

Replan City Life
Shaping Circular Cities

FACT SHEET

RECYCLED SBR INFILL MATERIAL FOR ARTIFICIAL TURF

RUBBER INFILL MATERIAL HAS BETTER ELASTICITY AND SHOCK ABSORPTION

Rubber granulate in the size range of 1-2,5 mm obtained from tyre recycling is used as infill material in artificial turfs to enhance surface performance (elasticity, rebound, shock-absorption).

This infill material offers by far the best quality / price ratio. It represents 80% of the infill material on the market and contributes in a very significant way to make artificial turf more competitive and sustainable compared to alternative materials.

COMBINED WITH OTHER ELEMENTS IT DELIVERS HIGH QUALITY OUTCOMES

Artificial turf is a technically complex system enhanced by these other elements. The main ones are:

- Carpet (synthetic fiber grass)
- Sand (to stabilize the turf)
- Infill material (performance material in shape of granulate infilled into the grass from the top)

The carpet is essential but alone is not sufficient, as it lacks the elastic performance which is given to the artificial grass system by the infill material.

For more information, your questions and suggestions

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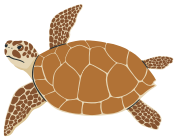
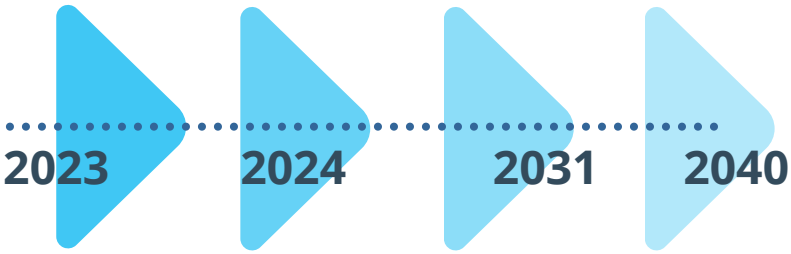


LONG LASTING MATERIAL

Recycled SBR infill material obtained from tyre recycling is by far the best performing and cheapest infill material. It does not age under sun and weather actions, it is stable, resistant and long lasting and does not break up under pressure from shoe cleats as happens with other infill materials.



POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACT

Recycled SBR infill material used in Artificial Turf makes for the cheapest and best performing fields, allowing Sport to spread to many disadvantaged urban areas, contribute to sports popularity and reduced social stress, especially among young people.

The ban implementation will reduce the number of fields available and the opportunities for youth to have access to sport, which is today perceived as a right, which is codified in many legislative systems.

GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Every year 4,2 Millions Tonnes of EOL Tyre arise in the EU, Norway, Switzerland and UK. It is important that these quantities be recycled in Europe in a sustainable way, like infill material production.

Artificial turf and sport and leisure are today the leading markets for tyre-derived materials from tyre recycling. The ban on recycled rubber infill will further feed growing flows of waste exports towards faraway, non EU, countries, with low environmental controls.

NUMBER OF FIELDS AFTER THE BAN

RIGHT TO SPORT

Sport must be guaranteed to all children and adolescents because promotes health, it is good for the body, mind and character, promotes socialization by helping to break down barriers between oneself and others, reduces people's selfishness, encourages new friendships and the ability to collaborate, helps to get to know each other.

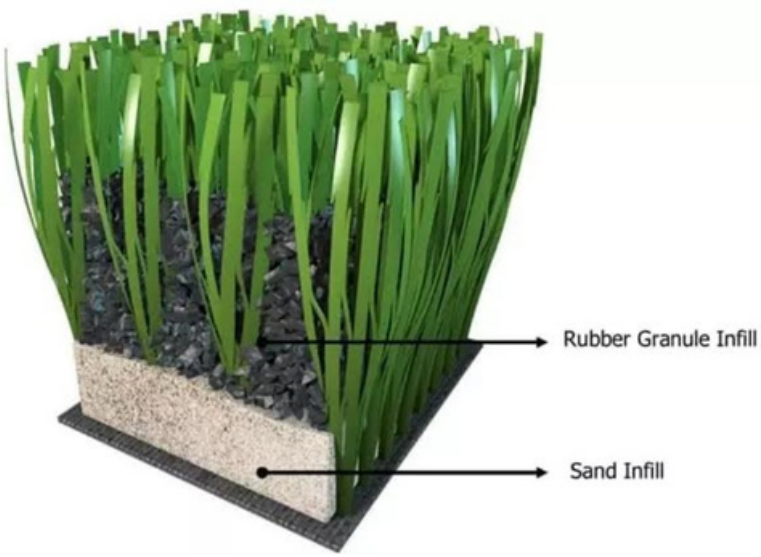
RE-USABLE AFTER END OF LIFE

After 10-12 years depending on intensity of use artificial turf will reach the end of its design life and will need to be renewed. There are today various technologies that are able to remove the old field and separate various components. The carpet must be replaced by a new one. The sand and rubber can be used many times over for the same purpose, in new fields or in the same location, saving money and CO2 emissions.

NO ADDITIONAL RISK TO HEALTH

Artificial turf has been held responsible for the release of rubber granulate, (considered as microplastics), into the environment. This risk is widely overestimated and the concern exaggerated:

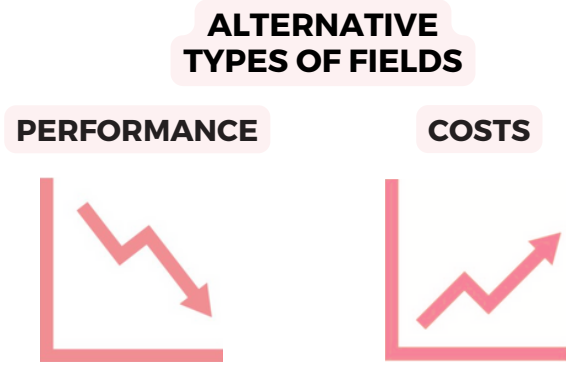
- Rubber granulate infill materials are too big to fragment in a way that can be absorbed by living organisms
- To date there is no sufficient scientific evidence that recycled rubber materials are absorbed into the food chain.

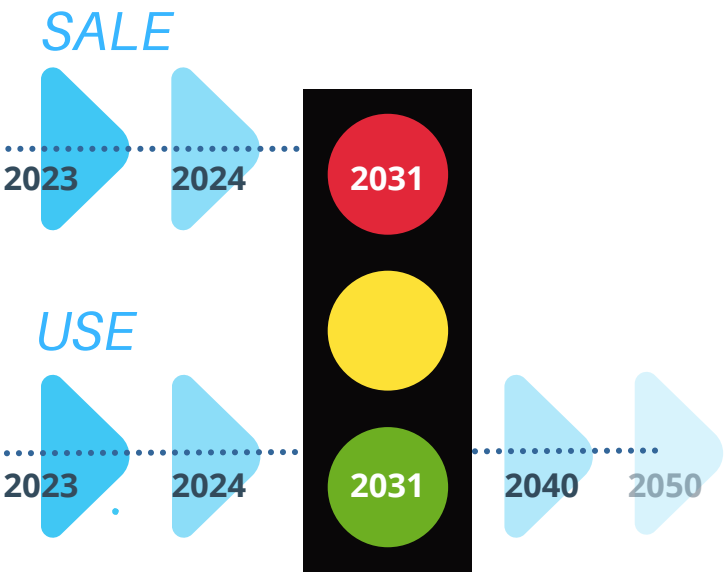


UNSUITABLE ALTERNATIVES

An equal performing Artificial Grass, without polymeric infill material, has not yet been developed and would require at least an elastic layer (underneath) to increase turf elasticity, but also a very dense layer of grass to give an even surface for both the ball and the shoe cleats.

This solution would at least double weight per square meter of polymeric fibers, as well as add to costs. The so called organic infill materials do not perform well and degrade fast obliging to continuous purchase of material integration works.





WHAT TO DO?

We must be clear and repeat that for the next 8 years, until 15 October 2031, fields can be made with recycled rubber infill material and that they can remain in regular operation until they reach the end of their life which could be estimated around 2040 – 2045 depending on the number of hours played.

INFILL BAN

On 26 September 2023 the EU Commission adopted the decision to ban the sale (not the use) of polymeric materials for infill, starting from 15 October 2031. This decision is creating concerns among end users about possible limitation of the use of artificial fields.

These concerns are maliciously and fraudulently fueled by those with commercial interests in alternative materials that are claimed to be better, but still not as good as recycled SBR.

RESPONSIBLE USE AND MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance guarantees this described performance over a long period of time. It is also advisable that the new fields be always constructed with suitable containment measures which have now become recognized good practice.

This represents not only a clear signal of responsibility and coherence, but a necessary premise for sustainable use and management over the coming 8 years and the subsequent life span of these fields.

KEY POINTS

The use of recycled rubber infill materials in artificial turf is:

- Legal, safe, environmental friendly, sustainable, in line with GPP and the Green Deal
- More durable and better performing that any other infill
- Cheaper than other materials contributing to make Artificial Turf affordable by small Sports Associations and Public Bodies.
- Reusable, many times over for the same purpose
- Social inclusive