

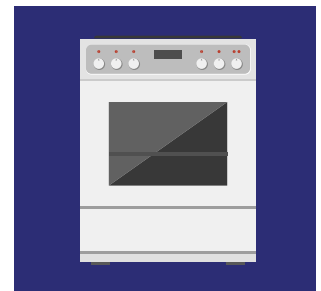
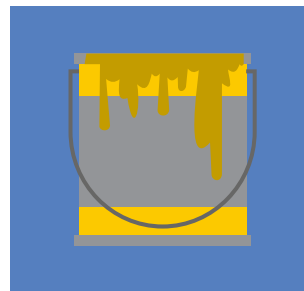


# RECYCLE RIGHT SC

## A Guide to Residential Recycling

Provided by the S.C. Department of Environmental Services' (SCDES)  
Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling and PalmettoPride

[recyclerightsc.org](http://recyclerightsc.org)



# Do your part and Recycle Right SC!

Recycling is working in South Carolina, but there is room for improvement. Each of us – individuals, businesses, organizations, schools – needs to do our part. That means not only recycling but recycling right.

Recycling **contamination** happens when:

1. **Items not accepted for recycling are placed in the recycling bin;** or
2. **Items accepted for recycling are not prepared properly** (e.g., food or liquid left in containers, bagged recyclables).



**Only recycle items that your local program accepts.**

Contamination results in significantly increased costs and labor to remove. The entire collected load may even have to be disposed of if the contamination is too great. Increased costs also can lead to the elimination of accepting certain material or the discontinuation of the program.

**Recycle right, South Carolina.**

## Acknowledgements

“Recycle Right SC: A Guide to Residential Recycling” is published by SCDES’ Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling.

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Visit [des.sc.gov/recycle](http://des.sc.gov/recycle) or call **1-800-768-7348** for more information.

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**Recycle Right SC** is an outreach campaign directed at South Carolina residents and designed to increase awareness of how to recycle correctly and help reduce contamination. The campaign – created in partnership between SCDES and PalmettoPride – provides information, tools and resources to help make recycling both easy and effective. Visit [recyclerightsc.org](http://recyclerightsc.org) for more information.



SC DEPARTMENT of  
**ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES**



# Why Should I Recycle?

## RECYCLING CREATES JOBS.

Recycling supports more than 300 companies and 42,000-plus jobs that comprise South Carolina's recycling industry.



## RECYCLING IS A GREEN ECONOMY.

Recycling has a \$13.5 billion annual economic impact in South Carolina.



## RECYCLING SAVES AND MAKES MONEY.

Throwing away aluminum and steel cans, cardboard, and other valuable recyclables not only is costly, but also throws away potential revenue from the sale of the wasted material.



## RECYCLING CONSERVES FINITE NATURAL RESOURCES.

Recycling prevents the harvesting of virgin material as well as other resources required to process it.



## RECYCLING CONSERVES ENERGY.

Manufacturing products using recycled material reduces the need for raw material, which saves the energy required to extract and process it.



## RECYCLING MEANS LESS EXTRACTION, LESS POLLUTION.

Reducing the need to extract and process raw material prevents pollution and lowers greenhouse gases.



## RECYCLING REDUCES THE NEED FOR NEW LANDFILLS.

Reducing, reusing, and recycling saves landfill space by diverting valuable material from disposal.



## RECYCLING REDUCES LITTER.

As much as 75 percent of litter is material that can be recycled. Recycling this material helps protect the environment and wildlife as well as avoid costs associated with clean-up efforts.



## RECYCLING TURNS WASTE INTO RAW MATERIAL.

Recycling provides the valuable raw material that manufacturers rely on to make recycled-content products.



## RECYCLING IS EASY.

Each of the state's 46 counties has a residential recycling program. In fact, South Carolina has nearly 70 curbside programs, 535-plus drop-off centers, and more than 900 collection sites for do-it-yourself (DIY) motor oil changers.



# How Does Recycling Work?

Recycling is a **three-step loop** that turns waste into raw material to make new products.

1

## COLLECTION & PROCESSING

Items are collected either separately or together (single-stream). Then items are either ...

1. Taken to a **Material Recovery Facility** to be sorted, baled and sent to a **recycling market**; OR
2. Baled material is sent directly to a **recycling market**.

Recyclables are collected and processed for recycling vendors.

## DO NOT BAG RECYCLABLES!

Plastic bags are the No. 1 contaminant. Reuse, recycle at a grocery store or give to a food bank.

Buying recycled-content products ensures the success and value of recycling.

Recyclables are sold to manufacturers to make new recycled-content products.

3

## BUY RECYCLED!

- **Plastic bottles, jugs and jars** make new bottles, clothing, rulers and backpacks.
- **Glass bottles, jugs and jars** make new bottles, jars and fiberglass
- **Newspaper and cardboard** become paper, pens, boxes and insulation.
- **Steel cans** become bicycles, nails and even cars.
- **Aluminum cans** make new cans and lawn furniture.

## MANUFACTURING

- **Plastic bottles, jugs and jars** are chipped, melted and remolded.
- **Glass bottles, jugs and jars** are ground into fine grains, melted and molded.
- **Newspaper and cardboard** are shredded, pulped, dried and flattened.
- **Steel and aluminum cans** are crushed, melted and flattened into sheets.

**ONLY RECYCLE** what is accepted in your program. Visit [des.sc.gov/recycleheresc](https://des.sc.gov/recycleheresc).

# Recycling: The Basics

## Recycling starts with you!

Recycling begins when you place the correct items in the cart, bin or drop-off site container. The material is picked up, taken to a facility where it is prepared for market, sold and used to manufacture a new product. See “How Does Recycling Work?” on page 4. Here are answers to four frequently asked questions about recycling.



**1 WHAT AND WHERE CAN I RECYCLE?** Items commonly accepted include aluminum and steel cans, plastic bottles and jugs, cardboard and newspaper. It is important to **only** recycle what is accepted by your program. Learn what your local program accepts and where to recycle at [des.sc.gov/recycleheresc](https://des.sc.gov/recycleheresc).

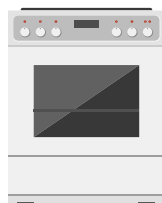
**2 WHAT CAN'T I RECYCLE?** Programs differ from community to community. Common items not accepted include plastic bags and shredded paper. See page 8 for “Recycling’s Dirty Dozen” for other common contaminants. **When in doubt, throw it out.**



**3 WHY ISN'T THIS ITEM ACCEPTED?** Markets and costs determine whether an item is recyclable in your area. If a recycling vendor is too far away, collection and hauling may be too costly for a local government. Know what your recycling program accepts.

**4 IS IT THE LAW TO RECYCLE IN SOUTH CAROLINA?** Yes and no. Recycling is voluntary with some exceptions. Large appliances, household electronics, tires, lead-acid batteries and used motor oil are required by law to be recycled. These items are accepted at county drop-off locations and/or single-day events as well as at many retailers.

- **Large Appliances** (e.g., refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers) – If you buy a new appliance, ask the retailer to take back your old one. Also check to see if your county accepts large appliances.



- **Household Electronics** – Counties provide collection at drop-off sites and/or at single-day events. Many retailers and manufacturers also offer take-back programs. Consider donating working electronics to a non-profit.



- **Tires** – Retailers, in most cases, accept and take responsibility for old tires from residents buying new tires. There is a \$2 advance recycling fee on each new tire purchased. In addition, counties accept waste tires from residents (often with a per visit limit).



- **Lead-Acid Batteries** – Retailers accept old lead-acid batteries from residents buying new batteries. There is a \$7 advance recycling fee on each new battery purchased. If you return the old battery when buying a new one, you will receive a \$5 credit and be charged only \$2. In addition, many local recycling programs also accept batteries.





- **Used Motor Oil** – There are more than 900 collection sites across the state for do-it-yourself oil changers. The network includes local government drop-off sites and participating retailers (e.g., AutoZone,<sup>®</sup> Advance Auto Parts,<sup>®</sup> O'Reilly Auto Parts,<sup>®</sup> Jiffy Lube,<sup>™</sup> NAPA Auto Parts<sup>®</sup>). Not all retailers participate. Make sure to call ahead.



# Recycle Hard-to-Manage Items

Some items are more difficult to manage than traditional recyclables. These typically are not collected in residential recycling programs, but other options may exist such as single-day collection events and/or retailer programs.

Always check with your local government recycling coordinator about recycling options available and/or visit [des.sc.gov/recycleheresc](https://des.sc.gov/recycleheresc).

- **Antifreeze** – Many counties accept antifreeze at drop-off sites. In addition, car dealerships, automotive repair shops and quick lube stores may also offer collection programs. 
- **Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) and Fluorescent Tubes** – Some counties accept CFLs and/or fluorescent tubes in permanent household hazardous waste programs or at single-day events. Check with your county recycling coordinator. Retailers (e.g., Lowe's™, The Home Depot™, Batteries Plus Bulbs™) also may accept CFLs and/or fluorescent tubes. Always check with the retailer first.
- **Cooking Oil** – Most counties accept cooking oil at one or more drop-off locations. If recycling isn't available, dispose of properly.
- **Gasoline or Gasoline/Oil Mixtures** – Most county programs accept gasoline or oil/gasoline mixtures at certain drop-off sites.
- **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)** – Some counties have permanent collection programs and/or single-day events to collect HHW (e.g., automotive fluids, cleaners, pesticides, pool chemicals). If the product cannot be used or recycled, properly dispose of it by following the label instructions. **NEVER** pour down a drain, on the ground or in the toilet. Visit [epa.gov/hw/household-hazardous-waste-hhw](https://epa.gov/hw/household-hazardous-waste-hhw) for more information. 
- **Mercury Thermostats** – Thermostat Recycling Corporation offers a national mercury recycling program. Visit [thermostat-recycle.org](https://thermostat-recycle.org) to find a location.

- **Oil Filters & Bottles** – Counties and businesses that collect used motor oil frequently also accept used motor oil filters and bottles from do-it-yourself oil changers.
- **Paint** – If paint is usable, donate it to a school, non-profit or other group. Counties may accept latex-based or oil-based paint for recycling or reuse. If paint cannot be used, donated or recycled, properly prepare it for disposal following these steps. 
  1. **Remove the lid and allow the paint to dry.** Do this in a well-ventilated area away from children and pets.
  2. **Add cat litter, shredded newspaper, sand or sawdust to the paint to speed up the drying process.** Stir occasionally.
  3. **Once the paint is dry, dispose of it with household garbage.**
- **Rechargeable Batteries** – Best Buy®, Lowe's™, Target®, The Home Depot™ and other large retailers may accept rechargeable batteries for recycling from consumers at no charge. Visit [call2recycle.org](https://call2recycle.org) to find the closest location. Batteries Plus Bulbs™ may also accept these batteries. For more details, visit [batteriesplus.com/t/recycling](https://batteriesplus.com/t/recycling). 

Earth 911 has a comprehensive information network of where to recycle common and hard-to-manage items. Visit [earth911.com](https://earth911.com).



# Help Make a Difference

**1 Learn about your community's recycling program.** Know what is accepted by your local program. Visit [des.sc.gov/recycleheresc](https://des.sc.gov/recycleheresc) to learn what and where to recycle or visit your local government's solid waste website.

**2 Participate.** If you do your part correctly, environmental benefits increase and the recycling program becomes more cost efficient.

**3 Recycle right.** Certain items (e.g., plastic bags, foam cups/plates, string lights) don't belong in your curbside recycling bin. See "Recycling's Dirty Dozen" on page 8 for common recycling contaminants. **When in doubt, throw it out.**

**4 Recycle with retailers.** Many retailers take specific items for recycling (e.g., household electronics, rechargeable batteries, printer cartridges, mercury thermostats, compact fluorescent lamps) that are not accepted by the local government program. See page 6 for more information.

**5 Recycle at work, school and on-the-go.** For businesses, visit [des.sc.gov/smartbusiness](https://des.sc.gov/smartbusiness). For K-12 schools, visit [des.sc.gov/k12recycling](https://des.sc.gov/k12recycling). For colleges/universities, visit [des.sc.gov/recycleu](https://des.sc.gov/recycleu). For state parks, visit [southcarolinaparks.com/recycling](https://southcarolinaparks.com/recycling).

**6 REDUCE YOUR OVERALL WASTE.** Americans generate almost 5 pounds of waste every day; do your part to produce less. Use reusable bags, containers, and water bottles. Stop unnecessary mail. Compost. Buy only what you need. **Recycle right.**



## Manage Unwanted Medications



Expired, unwanted or unused medications should be disposed of properly. Take-back programs provide a safe way to manage unwanted medicine. Some take-back options that may be available in your community include:

- **Pharmacies** (e.g., CVS, Walgreens);
- **Dispose My Meds** (learn more at [disposemy meds.org](https://disposemy meds.org));
- **Local law enforcement offices**; or
- **A National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day** held nationwide twice a year through the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Always check ahead to ensure collection is offered and what is accepted.

To learn more about proper disposal, visit [des.sc.gov/unwanted-medications](https://des.sc.gov/unwanted-medications).

## Safely Dispose of Needles



Needles, syringes and lancets from at-home, self-administered injections must be properly disposed of to prevent the spread of disease and harm to others. SCDES' "Get the Point" campaign provides the following steps for residents to safely manage these items. **NEVER** throw uncovered sharps into the trash or toilet.

1. **Find an empty bleach, detergent or similar bottle/jug.**
2. **Place a "Get the Point" warning sticker or tape a copy of the PDF download on the bottle.**
3. **Place used needles, syringes or lancets in the bottle.**
4. **When about 75 percent full, tightly secure the cap and dispose of the bottle in your household trash.**

To order stickers or download the free PDF, visit [des.sc.gov/getthepoint](https://des.sc.gov/getthepoint).

# Recycling's Dirty Dozen

NEVER PLACE THESE ITEMS IN YOUR CURBSIDE RECYCLING BIN!

**1** 

**PLASTIC BAGS**  
Reuse, donate to food banks, or recycle at the grocery store.

**2** 

**BAGGED ITEMS**  
Place recyclables loose in your recycling bin.

**3** 

**LIQUIDS**  
Empty liquids from all recyclable containers.

**4** 

**FOOD**  
No food or containers with food residue (e.g., greasy pizza boxes).

**5** 

**CLAMSHELLS**  
Containers used for takeout food or berries are not taken by most recycling programs.

**6** 

**ROPE-LIKE ITEMS**  
String lights, water hoses, and wire can jam recycling equipment.

**7** 

**SCRAP METAL**  
Heavy metal items can damage machinery. Donate or take these to recycling drop-offs.

**8** 

**BATTERIES**  
Batteries can cause fires or explode. Recycle via retail drop-offs.

**9** 


**PACKAGING MATERIALS**  
No block foam, bubble wrap, peanuts, or shrink wrap.

**10** 

**HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS**  
Check local program options or dispose of per label instructions.

**11** 

**PROPANE & BUTANE CYLINDERS**  
Tanks can explode and cause fires. Check with your program for collection events.

**12** 

**UNLISTED ITEMS**  
Learn what your recycling program accepts and place only those items in the bin.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!



# Home Isn't the Only Place to Recycle

## Recycling at School

In South Carolina, more than 1,260 schools with about 50,000 teachers/staff and 760,000 students generate significant amounts of waste – the vast majority of which could be prevented, recycled or composted. These actions help reinforce the importance of sustainable material management.

SCDES' Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling is designed to help schools not only teach students but also develop successful waste management programs for the school through:

- **Technical assistance;**
- **Curriculum supplement;**
- **Teacher training;**
- **Workshops;**
- **Classroom presentations; and**
- **Grant funding.**

Visit [des.sc.gov/k12recycling](http://des.sc.gov/k12recycling) for more information and to download the guides pictured. If you want to have recycling education brought to your school through the Take Action SC Environmental Education team, visit [takeactionsc.org](http://takeactionsc.org).



## Recycling at Work

Businesses and industry account for more than 60 percent of recycled material in South Carolina. Recycling is not only good for the environment and the economy but also for a company's bottom line. Recycling may save a business money in avoided disposal costs and can create new revenue from the sale of recovered material.



The S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program is a free, confidential initiative designed to:

- **Help businesses reduce their environmental impact;**
- **Provide technical assistance to begin or expand waste reduction and recycling programs; and**
- **Recognize businesses for their recycling and reporting efforts.**

To learn more, visit [des.sc.gov/smartbusiness](http://des.sc.gov/smartbusiness).

## Recycling at Colleges/Universities

Recycle U is a comprehensive program that provides technical assistance, best management practices and outreach material to S.C. colleges/universities in order to improve waste reduction, recycling and composting programs on campus.



Visit [des.sc.gov/recycleu](http://des.sc.gov/recycleu) for more details.

# More Actions to Reduce Waste

## Backyard Composting

Thinking about composting in the backyard? It's easy with only a little bit of effort.

Composting is nature's way of recycling. It involves little equipment, expense or expertise but produces a valuable gardening product.

The "Composting: Recycling Naturally" guide addresses all you need to know to compost at home.

To download the guide and for additional information, visit [des.sc.gov/compost](https://des.sc.gov/compost).



## Stop Unwanted Mail

Catalogs, credit card offers, and other advertisements can overwhelm your mailbox. One study estimated that each household receives more than 40 pounds of unwanted mail each year. Most of it can be recycled – including envelopes with windows. But be careful. Credit card applications and other unwanted mail containing any personal information should be shredded and thrown away. For more information, visit [des.sc.gov/unwanted-mailidentity-theft](https://des.sc.gov/unwanted-mailidentity-theft).



## Used Motor Oil Recycling

In South Carolina, it's the law to recycle used oil.

Used motor oil can contain hazardous substances such as heavy metals that pose potential risk to the environment and human health. There are more than 900 collection sites throughout the state for do-it-yourself (DIY) oil changers to take used motor oil for recycling. Many accept oil filters and oil bottles for recycling as well.

Visit [des.sc.gov/used-motor-oil-recycling](https://des.sc.gov/used-motor-oil-recycling) for more information.

**RECYCLE  
USED OIL**  
IT'S A **DO-IT-YOURSELF** THING

## Reduce Food Waste

Food is the No. 1 item Americans throw away. Each year up to 40 percent of the U.S. food supply is not consumed – a projected loss of \$218 billion nationwide. All of this while 50 million Americans – including 17 million children – experience food insecurity.

**Don't Waste Food SC** is a campaign designed to increase awareness of the economic, environmental, and social impacts of wasted food and inspire actions to reduce it. "Don't Waste Food SC: A Guide for Reducing Food Waste at Home" provides simple steps to waste less food, help feed those in need, and save money. Download the guide at [des.sc.gov/dwfs](https://des.sc.gov/dwfs) to learn more.



**DON'T WASTE  
FOOD SC**

# Litter Trashes Everyone

Litter is costly to clean up, adversely affects environmental quality, causes harm to wildlife and negatively impacts economic development. More than 80 percent of all litter is intentional and as much as 75 percent is material that could have been recycled. Here are 10 tips to help prevent litter.

- 1 Set an example by not littering.** In South Carolina, it is **AGAINST THE LAW** to dump, deposit, discard or dispose litter or solid waste (including cigarette butts) in waterways or on public/private property. **Violators may be fined or even jailed.**
- 2 Keep your yard clean and free of things that can blow into the street.**
- 3 When out and about, keep trash and recyclables in a bag or backpack to dispose of properly at home.**
- 4 Make sure garbage bags are tied securely and container lids are closed tightly.** Do not overfill collection containers.
- 5 Tie down your load - it's the law.** Vehicle or trailer loads must be securely fastened to prevent items from falling out and creating litter and/or driving hazards.
- 6 Organize neighborhood cleanups and beautification projects.** PalmettoPride has litter pick-up programs to help make South Carolina litter free. For more information, visit [palmettopride.org/get-involved/pickup-programs](http://palmettopride.org/get-involved/pickup-programs).
- 7 Educate family and friends about preventing litter and reducing waste.** Stress the importance of proper disposal and the impact litter has on the environment and wildlife.
- 8 Report litterbugs.** Call PalmettoPride's Litter Busters Hotline at **1-877-7-LITTER** or use the "Report a Litterbug" option at [palmettopride.org/enforcement/report-a-litterbug](http://palmettopride.org/enforcement/report-a-litterbug).
- 9 Ask your local school to teach lessons about protecting the environment.** Both PalmettoPride and SCDES offer K-12 environmental lessons. Visit [palmettopride.org/education](http://palmettopride.org/education) and [takeactionsc.org](http://takeactionsc.org) for more information.
- 10 Support businesses that have responsible solid waste policies, participate in litter pick-up programs or offer recycling programs.**

## Report Illegal Tire Piles

Illegally dumped tires create health and environmental risks. Tires collect rainwater and provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes that can transmit illnesses. Tire piles are fire hazards and can be very difficult to extinguish. They release toxic air pollutants and generate oil that can contaminate the ground and surface water.

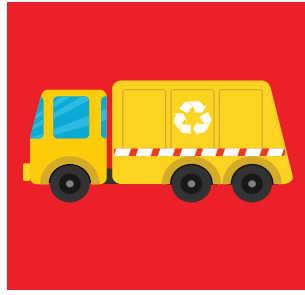
The "See It. Report It." campaign encourages residents to quickly and anonymously report illegal tire dumps. The campaign is a partnership with SCDES, PalmettoPride and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources.

To report a tire pile, see Tip No. 8 or contact your local SCDES Environmental Affairs Regional Office. Learn more at [des.sc.gov/see-it-report-it](http://des.sc.gov/see-it-report-it).



PalmettoPride is South Carolina's anti-litter and beautification non-profit, 501(c) 3 organization. Keep South Carolina Beautiful (KSCB) is the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Assisting with education, training, program development and more, KSCB is a key part of PalmettoPride and helps expand its programs and volunteer-base.





# Recycling Resources

## S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES)

Website ..... [des.sc.gov](http://des.sc.gov)  
Email ..... [info@des.sc.gov](mailto:info@des.sc.gov)

## SCDES' Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

Telephone ..... 1-800-768-7348  
Website ..... [des.sc.gov/recycle](http://des.sc.gov/recycle)

## Recycle Right SC

Website ..... [recyclerightsc.org](http://recyclerightsc.org)  
Email ..... [recyclelocal@des.sc.gov](mailto:recyclelocal@des.sc.gov)

## PalmettoPride/Keep South Carolina Beautiful

Telephone ..... 1-877-PAL-PRDE  
Litter Busters Hotline ..... 1-877-7LITTER  
Website ..... [palmettopride.org](http://palmettopride.org)  
Email ..... [info@palmettopride.org](mailto:info@palmettopride.org)



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## About the Office

SCDES' Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) was created by the S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act). The Act – prioritizing recovery over disposal – outlines specific responsibilities for the Office that include providing technical assistance, outreach/education programs and campaigns as well as grant funding to local governments, K-12 schools and colleges/universities.

Key programs and campaigns include Recycle Right SC, the Recycle Guys, Don't Waste Food SC, the S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program, the Green Government Initiative, Recycle U, Take Action SC and Be Battery Smart.

Learn more at [des.sc.gov/recycle](http://des.sc.gov/recycle) or call 1-800-768-7348.