



## **GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL LAWN MOWER EXCHANGE**

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Bureau of Air Quality has been involved in promoting, planning and coordinating Mow Down Pollution Lawn Mower Exchanges since 2007 throughout the State. The following information provides guidelines for planning a Lawn Mower Exchange in your area.

### **Description of a Lawn Mower Exchange**

A lawn mower exchange is an event held to improve air quality by offering residents who trade in their gasoline-powered mower a discount towards the purchase of an environmentally-friendly mower. Gas-powered mowers collected at the event are recycled.

Environmentally-friendly mowers currently offered at events throughout South Carolina include battery-powered, propane, and reel push mowers.

### **Goals of a Lawn Mower Exchange**

Lawn Mower Exchanges are designed to:

- Increase public awareness about the contribution of lawn and garden equipment to air pollution and potential health effects.
- Provide an incentive for the replacement of existing gasoline-powered lawn mowing equipment with an environmentally friendly alternative.
- Properly remove gas-powered mowers from service.

### **Outcomes of a Lawn Mower Exchange**

Lawn Mower Exchanges should:

- Reduce exposure to harmful emissions from the use of gasoline powered lawn mowers.
- Encourage everyone to make individual choices that will help reduce air pollution.
- Be planned and coordinated with local partners.



## Process:

### A. Planning and Evaluation

- Form a Lawn Mower Exchange committee consisting of internal and external partners.
- Appoint a local coordinator to work closely with the DHEC Lawn Mower Exchange coordinator.
- Planning for your first Lawn Mower Exchange should begin at least five (5) months prior to the exchange.
- Plan all Lawn Mower Exchanges around “lawn mower” season while citizens are shopping for a new mower (between March and May).
- Keep the cost of the exchange to a minimum, by developing local partnerships for in-kind services such as media coverage, recycling, providing a location, volunteers, as well as partners to donate funding
- Solicit the assistance of a non-profit organization to handle funding, if possible.
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the sponsors, partners, and vendors that are coordinating/planning the exchange. The MOU should clearly describe the responsibilities of each party involved.
- Develop a survey to be filled out by all participants in the Lawn Mower Exchange event. The survey is used to gather information for estimating potential emissions reductions and feedback from citizens about the event overall.

### B. Choosing a Location

Choose a location that:

- Have neighborhoods in the area with appropriately sized yards (not ideal for rural areas).
- Have residents that are willing to pay the offered price for the mower.
- Is convenient for the residents of the counties/area sponsoring the Lawn Mower Exchange.



- Allows for efficient traffic flow on and around the site so idling is kept to a minimum.
- Offers sufficient space for mower drop off, pick up, paperwork/money exchange and volunteer (tent) area.
- Offers a means (e.g. forklift or trailer) to transport the mowers from the on-site storage area to the area designated for mower pickup.
- Consider a space with electricity (processing payments, charging of mowers/equipment, etc.)
- Consider a space that can be adapted in case of changes in weather (shade, rain, wind, etc.)
- Consider a location with restroom accessibility for volunteers and participants

### **C. Funding and Partners**

- Funding from sponsors/partners must be identified early in the planning process in order to support your exchange. Consider the following:
  - How many mowers would you like to subsidize?
  - What will the subsidy amount be for each mower?
  - How many volunteers may be needed the day of the exchange?
- Most of the funding should be used to subsidize the cost of the mowers to provide an additional discounted price for your participants.
- Other funding may be used to offset expenses such as advertisement, location fees, refreshments for volunteers, tent rental, etc.



The following table is an example of the funding and expenses for Lawn Mower Exchanges:

**Revenue:**

Revenue: In-Kind Services/Volunteers	\$ 00.00
State Government Agency	\$ 1,800.00
Local County Government	\$ 8,000.00
Local Municipality	\$ 2,500.00
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$ 12,300.00</b>

**Expenditures:**

Expenditures: In-Kind Services/Volunteers	Priceless!
Subsidy/Discount for mowers/\$90.00 x 125 mowers	\$11,250.00
Expenses (tent, food, beverages, etc...)	\$1,050.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$12,300.00</b>

**D. Choosing a Vendor**

When choosing a vendor, consider the following:

- Can the vendor provide a mower that meets the desired specifications? (environmentally-friendly, easy to use/maintain, inexpensive to operate, etc.)
- What accessories come with the mower?
- What type of discounted price can the vendor offer?
- Does the discounted price include shipping and/or tax?
- Is the vendor able and willing to work with committee coordinating the exchange?
- Does the vendor offer the option of having mowers for sale on-site or by voucher/coupon?
- Can the vendor provide vouchers/coupons (at the vendor’s discounted price—no trade-in required) for an extended period of time following the Lawn Mower Exchange event, if needed?



- Can the vendor donate mower/equipment for display and/or drawing?
- Can the vendor assist in designing coupons and promotional materials for your exchange?
- Will the vendor provide representatives to process sales/money handling?
- What is the time-frame the vendor will need to transport the mowers to the exchange location?
- Will the vendor ship back the unsold mowers at no charge?
- Does the vendor require a deposit before the mowers are transported?

**E. Publicity** (*People will not show up if they don't know about your exchange!*)

- Demonstrate the mower, have it on display, and provide information at other events prior to your Lawn Mower Exchange.
- Utilize in-kind services that can provide help with media relations.
- Send out press releases and flyers.
- Contact local media outlets (newspaper, radio and TV) informing them of your event.
- Conduct interviews for radio and television.
- Post event information on committee members' web sites.
- To peak public interest, have a drawing for the free mower provided by the vendor.
- "Piggy-back" on other planned events in the area for additional advertising, such as Earth Day events.

**F. Mower Disposal**

Choose a mower disposal vendor that:

- Will take care of mower collection, transport, disposal (recycling) and fluid drainage, if necessary.
- Is in close proximity to your exchange.



### **G. Volunteers**

- Appoint a volunteer coordinator from the committee.
- Estimate the number of volunteers needed based on the size and complexity of the exchange.
- Consider the number of staff needed to assist with traffic flow, survey distribution/collection, unloading used lawnmowers from vehicles, removing oil/gas from used lawnmowers, loading new lawnmowers into vehicles, answer citizen questions, demonstrate mower/equipment, etc.
- Volunteers should arrive at least one (1) hour prior for set up, go over assignments and expectations.
- Designate volunteers for the day before event if set up needs to take place then.
- Consider having partners donate volunteers for pre-event and/or event activities. Have it stated in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Provide snacks and beverages for the volunteers.

### **H. Exchange Day**

- Set up areas for mower drop off, pick up, paperwork/money exchange and volunteer (tent) area.
- Plan for eager participants to arrive at least one hour prior to the exchange.
- Provide the traffic flow plan and exchange layout for the volunteers.
- Post signage for traffic flow throughout the exchange site, including entrances and exits.
- Hand out all of the paperwork as participants line up (provide clip board and pen)
  - Vendor product order form, survey, etc.
  - If needed, also distribute a number to each participant in line with a trade-in that corresponds to the amount of subsidized mowers (do not print more numbers than available subsidized mowers).



- Have the vendor-discounted vouchers/coupons (event price) available to the participants who did not bring a trade-in or were not in line early enough to receive the lowest discount voucher/coupon.

### **I. After the Exchange**

- Hold a follow-up meeting soon after each exchange to evaluate for future changes.
- Compile funding reports and survey exchange results to be presented at follow up meeting.
- Distribute reports and results to all participating entities.
- Establish contact person(s) for event coupon for an agreed-upon period of time. Post on website(s) as well.
- Local coordinator (and DHEC coordinator, if necessary) will work with funds handler to ensure prompt payment to participating vendors.



**For questions or additional information, please contact Channell Webster in the Bureau of Air Quality by phone at (803) 898-4372 or [webstecv@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:webstecv@dhec.sc.gov).**