

Best Management Practices



Managing and Recycling Pallets

Why recycle? When you recycle you can: cut disposal costs; possibly create new revenue from the sale of recovered materials; and lessen your environmental impact by adopting sustainable practices. And recycling is not only good for the environment, it's also good for South Carolina's economy – providing more than 20,000 jobs and more than \$4.49 billion in investments from 2006 to 2012.

Pallets are very common in the business world because they are one of the most practical and economical ways to transport goods. Problems arise, however, when pallets become damaged or altogether obsolete. Your business can benefit financially by taking a proactive role in managing used pallets. You may be able to drastically cut disposal costs and effectively reuse pallets.

Gather the facts.

It's important to get an accurate picture of how pallets are used and how they are presently managed at your business. Consider how many you have, how they are managed, how much they cost and if they are easily damaged. This information will help you decide if you should repair, recycle or invest in higher quality pallets.

Management Options

■ Reuse

- Have suppliers take back pallets from previous shipments.
- If you employ delivery drivers, have them pick up pallets from previous shipments. Think about charging a fee for pallets that are not returned.
- Consider investing in high quality wooden pallets or pallets made from plastic, metal or composite materials that can be used over and over again.

- Go palletless. Look into slip sheets, reusable containers and rolling carts. These are often reusable, recyclable and easy to clean.

■ Repair

- Repair damaged pallets for a fraction of the cost it takes to buy new ones. Sometimes all it takes is a few nails and a new board.

■ Recycle

- Pallet recycling usually involves grinding the wood for use as fuel at paper mills and other large industries.
- Think outside the box. Wood from pallets has been used as flooring and as scrap wood for building.
- To find a recycler, visit www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness.
- Find out what levels of service and prices are available to you from different recyclers.
- For further assistance, contact your local solid waste department or call the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) at 1-800-768-7348. For more information about recycling in your community, visit www.scdhec.gov/recycle.

■ Exchange

- Use the S.C. Materials Exchange, visit www.scdhec.gov/scme, to post a listing for your used pallets.

R²: Recycle and Report

It's smart business to recycle. It's also smart business to report your recycling activities. South Carolina has set a goal to recycle 40 percent of its municipal solid waste. Your numbers count. Your numbers are needed to reach that goal.

Reporting is easy. **Keep track of what and how much you recycled.** You can keep your own records or your recycler may do it for you and report the information back to you. **Once you have the numbers, call your county recycling**

coordinator. For contact information on your county recycling coordinator, visit www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm or call 1-800-768-7348.

Reporting is done by fiscal year so you need to keep track of your recycling activities from July 1 to June 30. You should report your information to your county recycling coordinator after June 30 (the earlier the better). **Do your part. Recycle and report.**

Recycling. It doesn't cost. It pays.

For more information regarding business recycling and waste reduction, call 1-800-768-7348 or visit www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness.



The South Carolina Smart Business Recycling Program is a partnership of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program and Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling. The program provides a variety of services to help businesses reduce waste, recycle and develop sustainable practices.