

FOREWORD

S.C. Recycling Professionals Certification

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Why a certification for recycling professionals?

That's simple. Recycling professionals – particularly recycling coordinators – are the key players in making recycling work. And recycling is working – both nationwide and in South Carolina.

The S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act) provided the legislative momentum to recycling in the state. The Act, which established a comprehensive approach to solid waste management, requires each county to designate a recycling coordinator, set a statewide recycling goal, requires that counties and regions develop solid waste management plans to meet the state's recycling goal and mandates the recycling of specific materials.

More than 17 years after the passage of the Act, South Carolina's recycling infrastructure has grown to nine materials recovery facilities, about 80 curbside collection programs, more than 600 drop-off sites and more than 800 used motor oil collection sites for do-it-yourself (DIY) oil changers.

In fiscal year (FY) 2008 (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008), the state recycled about 1.1 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW). Here's another way of looking at that number: in FY08, South Carolinians recycled 69 pounds of MSW per second. Since FY04, South Carolinians have recycled more than 5 million tons of MSW.

Both used motor oil and waste tires have been success stories. In calendar year 2007 (the latest figures available), DIYers in South Carolina recycled more than 1 million gallons of used motor oil for the ninth straight year. In 2006, South Carolina was recognized as having the top program in the nation for the management of waste tires according to the Rubber Manufacturers Association.

About this Manual...

"The S.C. Recycling Professionals Certification Manual" is published by DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling.

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There are other positive indicators. The recycling industry in the state has a \$6.5 billion impact on South Carolina's economy according to a study conducted by the College of Charleston. In a 2006-2007 statewide telephone survey on the recycling habits and motivations of South Carolinians, 77 percent of the 1,001 respondents said they consider themselves recyclers.

Recycling is working, but it is changing, maturing and evolving as well. Recycling provides economic and environmental benefits. Recycling helps protect human health through pollution prevention. Recycling plays an integral role in newer, rapidly developing environmental efforts such as sustainability, product stewardship, green building, environmentally preferred purchasing and zero waste.

But as any recycling professional knows, making recycling work isn't easy. Obstacles are everywhere. Responsibilities are endless. There is never enough time. In short, successful and sustainable recycling programs are difficult to implement, maintain and grow.

Recycling is working, but it has not reached its full potential. There's much more work to do. There are many challenges that have to be met to build on what has been accomplished in the past 17-plus years. Addressing funding issues, developing more markets, implementing better management practices and increasing program participation are key challenges.

Recycling coordinators are on the front line facing these challenges. Despite being the centerpiece of recycling programs, in reality most of the state's recycling coordinators have numerous responsibilities – many of which are not related to solid waste management.

The S.C. Recycling Professionals Certification is the latest professional development program offered by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office). This certification joins the mandatory certification of municipal solid waste landfill managers and supervisors as well as training for construction and demolition debris landfill operators and transfer station operators.

The goal of this certification is to provide recycling coordinators and other recycling professionals with the background, information and tools to make programs grow and improve as well as become more cost competitive and sustainable. Just as importantly, the Office believes that this certification will reinforce to decision makers and others the crucial role that recycling coordinators play. Recycling coordinators are professionals.

This training manual provides both national and South Carolina-specific information on solid waste management issues, including an overview of solid waste management and recycling in South Carolina. Other subjects addressed include contracts, paying for programs, material processing, markets as well as public education and promotion. The course highlights best management practices as well as resources available nationally and from the Office.