



Lesson Resources

Residential Recycling: Back to the Basics

It's just right to recycle. Recycling is good for the environment, human health and the economy. The recyclables that you place in your curbside bin or take to a drop-off center have value. By turning recyclables into material that can be bought and sold, recycling creates jobs and adds significantly to the nation's economy. Recycling promotes the sustainable use of natural resources. Recycling saves energy. Recycling reduces pollution. Recycling lessens the need to build landfills and incinerators. Recycling works.

How does recycling work?

Recycling is not mandatory in South Carolina – it's voluntary. It's up to you. Local governments design and run the programs that need your participation to be successful. No matter how small or large your local recycling program, it's up to you to make it work by participating in it. The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) was created to support local government recycling programs with grant funding, technical assistance as well as education and outreach programs.

Where can I recycle?

Recycle at home, school and work – just about anywhere. South Carolina has about 93 curbside recycling programs and 642 recycling drop-off centers. There are recycling opportunities in each of the state's 46 counties. If you're on the go, take your recyclables home. Do-it-yourself oil changers can recycle used motor oil, filters and bottles at more than 920 collection sites.

What can I recycle?

Most programs accept traditional recyclables such as aluminum cans, plastic bottles (soft drink, detergent, shampoo and other similar bottles as well as milk jugs), newspapers (including inserts), cardboard, steel cans (fruit, vegetable, soup and other food as well as beverage cans) and glass bottles (clear, green and brown). Programs also accept many other items such as magazines, office paper and unwanted mail.

How do I find out what and where to recycle in South Carolina?

If you do not know what or where to recycle, call the Office at 1-800-768-7348 or visit www.scdhec.gov/recycle and click on WHERE TO RECYCLE LOCALLY. You will find a listing of all the programs in your county, what is accepted, where and who to call locally for more information.

What is the best way to prepare my recyclables?

It's great that you want to recycle, but a couple of simple tips will help you recycle the right way.

- Throw away lids and caps.
- Rinse bottles and cans.
- Remove plastic bags and rubber bands from newspapers.
- Flatten cardboard and plastic bottles.
- Generally, you should not bag your recyclables.
- Recycle only what your program accepts.

For general information on how to prepare your recyclables, see the "Residential Recycling Guide" on the back of this page. For specific information on what is required in your community, contact your local recycling coordinator.

Remember, quality is as important as quantity. It is better to leave an item out of a recycling container than to include one that does not belong. One wrong item can contaminate a whole load of recyclables.

Residential Recycling Chart

This chart provides general information – or best practices – on what and how to recycle specific items. Please follow your local program guidelines. Items listed below are collected for recycling in one or more communities in South Carolina.

	DOs	DON'Ts
ALUMINUM	Food and beverage cans, foil, "pie" plates. Rinse and flatten.	Some program DO NOT ACCEPT foil or "pie" plates.
APPLIANCES	See METAL, SCRAP.	
ANTIFREEZE	Check to see if your local automobile repair shop will accept it.	DO NOT mix with other automobile fluids.
ATHLETIC SHOES	Any brand. Laces OK.	NO cleats. Don't tie together.
BATTERIES, LEAD-ACID	Auto, truck, boat, motorcycle, lawnmower, etc.	
BATTERIES, RECHARGEABLE	Nickel Cadmium (Ni-cd), Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion (Li-ion), Small Sealed Lead (Pb) less than two pounds.	NO alkaline batteries.
BOOKS	Keep dry.	
CARPET PADDING	Keep dry.	
CARDBOARD	Boxes and brown paper bags. Flatten.	DO NOT include paperboard cereal, beverage cartons, shoeboxes, etc. NO pizza boxes. Remove all packing material.
CELL PHONES		DO NOT take apart.
COOKING OIL	Store in a container with lid.	
ELECTRONICS		DO NOT take apart.
EYE GLASSES	Donate them to your local civic organization.	
FLUORESCENT BULBS		DO NOT break or crush.
GLASS BOTTLES AND JARS	Clear, green and brown bottles and jars. Labels OK.	DO NOT include window glass, drinking glass, pottery, porcelain or china. NO lids.
MAGAZINES	Magazines and other glossy paper such as high gloss advertising.	Do not bag or tie.
METAL, SCRAP	Appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, washers and dryers as well as grills, bicycles, etc.	
MOTOR OIL	Used motor oil, kerosene, power steering fluid, diesel, automatic transmission fluid, hydraulic fluid.	DO NOT include brake fluid, antifreeze, paint thinner or solvents.
MOTOR OIL BOTTLES	See PLASTIC BOTTLES, JARS AND JUGS.	
MOTOR OIL FILTERS		
MOTOR OIL/GASOLINE	Gasoline or mixture of oil and gasoline	
NEWSPAPERS	Inserts OK.	DO NOT bag or tie.
PAPER, MIXED OFFICE	Mail, letterhead, notebook paper, sticky notes, envelopes (windows OK), copy paper, etc.	NO fluorescent colors. DO NOT bag. Staples OK. Shred if necessary.
PAPERBOARD	Packaging cartons for food (cereal, sodas, etc.) and household items.	
PLASTIC BOTTLES, JARS AND JUGS	Food, beverage and household products such as laundry, cleaning and shampoo. Rinse and flatten. Motor oil bottles must be drained properly (overnight) but not rinsed. Labels OK.	NO lids, tubs, bags, film or Styrofoam.
PRINTER CARTRIDGES	Check to see if your local office supply store has a take-back program.	
STEEL CANS	Food and beverage. Rinse. Labels OK. Push lids to inside. Include empty aerosol cans.	DO NOT puncture empty aerosol cans.
TEXTILES	Clothing, shoes, belts, purses, hats, towels, linens and blankets.	DO NOT bag.
TELEPHONE BOOKS	Keep dry. Opt out of receiving a new telephone book.	
TIRES	Car, motorcycle, bus and truck tires without rims	
YARD TRIMMINGS	Tree limbs, leaves, brush, Christmas trees, etc. Bag or properly cover for taking to recycling, but empty bags to recycle.	NO stumps, large logs or treated wood.