

Recommendations for Improving Solid Waste Management



SECTION 3

The S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act) – S.C. Code of Laws § 44-96-60 – requires the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to make annual recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on how to improve the state’s management of solid waste.

Much has been accomplished since the passage of the Act.

South Carolina developed and implemented regulations on landfills and solid waste facilities to better protect human health and the environment. The state revised its composting regulation to address food waste – the largest source of waste – and encourage the development of an organics recovery infrastructure.

The state also revised its waste tire regulation to strengthen collection, processing and disposal requirements. South Carolina has built one of the nation’s best used motor oil recycling programs with more than 900 collection sites for do-it-yourself oil changers – preventing improper disposal that contaminates the state’s lakes, rivers and ground water.

The state’s recycling infrastructure has grown to 85 curbside programs and 579 recycling drop-off centers. Each of South Carolina’s 46 counties has a recycling program. Recycling is available at all of South Carolina’s state parks, historic sites and major airports. In the past five years, the state’s recycling industry has announced more than \$1.1 billion in capital investments and the creation of nearly 2,500 jobs.

The accomplishments are significant, but much remains to be done. Despite individuals, businesses, organizations, schools, colleges/universities and government agencies recycling more than ever, more than 70 percent of the municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in South Carolina was disposed of in landfills during fiscal year (FY) 2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017). Disposal of valuable material is a waste of resources and lost economic opportunity.

Many recommendations have been made over the years to provide direction for South Carolina to manage its waste more efficiently, meet its waste reduction and recycling goals and realize more of the economic benefits of recycling. Two key recommends will be the focus of the section.



1

Reduce contamination. Recycle right.

Contamination – placing items in recycling containers that cannot be recycled – makes processing recyclables more difficult, damages equipment, lowers the value of the material that can be recycled and increases local government program costs.

The amount of contamination has grown nationwide in the past few years. This increase has resulted in China (a major market) creating an import ban on specific commodities including unsorted mixed paper and various grades of plastic as well as setting a more stringent standard for contamination levels.

These actions have impacted programs across the United States. Contamination has led not only to a drop in revenue, but also a rise in costs for many programs. Processors, for example, look much more carefully at loads and charge local governments for contaminated material or are unable to accept the material.

Education remains the key to reducing contamination. Residents must understand the negative impacts of high contamination rates. The following recommendations are centered on outreach initiatives and other steps local governments can take to reduce contamination.

Steps to Consider

DHEC should continue to provide technical assistance and outreach material to help local governments reduce contamination. (Pictured below is the first in a series of newspaper ads created by DHEC for the City of Columbia.)

Local governments should meet with appropriate stakeholders (e.g., materials recovery facilities) to assess contamination rates. Make sure the information provided on outreach material matches what processors accept. Target specific items that are causing contamination.

Local governments should work with haulers to identify and address issues.

Processors should keep local governments informed in a timely manner of potential changes to material accepted and market fluctuations.

Local governments should create outreach plans and revise annually. Consider all forms of communication.

Do your part Columbia!

recyclemoreSC.org

Don't let the **DIRTY DOZEN** into your recycling roll cart.

These items **ARE NOT ACCEPTED** in the curbside recycling program.

Dirty Dozen Item No. 1
PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS

Dirty Dozen Item No. 2
PLASTIC BAGS FILLED WITH RECYCLABLES

Recycle more and recycle right with the City of Columbia, SC Solid Waste app. It's free on iPhone and Android or sign up at ColumbiaSC.net.

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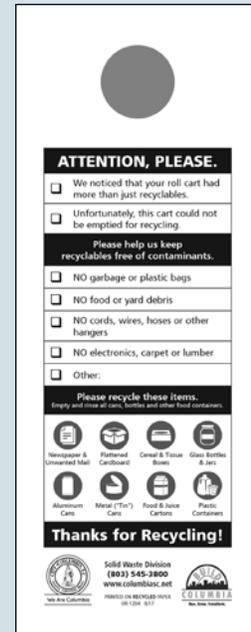
BUILD COLUMBIA Run. Grow. Transform.

CITY OF COLUMBIA We Are Columbia

Outreach Options

Local governments have many options for their outreach plans to residents. Here are some things to consider.

- **Make sure website information is up-to-date and easy to find.**
- **Communicate beyond the web.** Consider sending an annual postcard to all serviced households with basic information (e.g., yes and no lists). Advertise when and where possible (e.g., billboards, libraries, stores, bus signage, neighborhood newsletters, social media). See the vacation recycling billboard used by Beaufort County below.
- **Consider neighborhood captains to help get out the word.**
- **Place a sticker on the roll cart or bin showing what is accepted and is not accepted.** See the sticker used by the City of Spartanburg at the bottom of the page.
- **Consider an “Oops” tag to remind residents what is not accepted.** Consider “Thank You” tags for positive feedback. On the right is an “oops” door hanger distributed by the City of Columbia.
- **Make sure the signage at drop-off locations is easy to follow.** Post temporary signage to reinforce an issue or message. Train drop-off location staff to assist residents in preventing contamination. Pictured on the right is a collection site sign used by the City of Myrtle Beach.



<p>For service, place your recycling cart out for pick up by 7:30 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month.</p> <h2>City of Spartanburg RECYCLING GUIDELINES</h2> <p>For more information, call (864) 596-3690 or visit spartanburgrecycling.com.</p> <p>FUNDED BY</p>   <p>08-1323 9/16</p>	<p>Place only these <u>APPROVED ITEMS</u> in the recycling cart.</p>  <p>YES</p>	<p>DO NOT place these items in the recycling cart.</p>  <p>NONE OF THE FOLLOWING! Glass, Garbage, Food, Plastic Bags, Yard Trimmings, Hazardous Waste, Hardback Books, Hand Towels, Tissue/Toilet Paper, Plastic-coated Paper or Styrofoam</p> <p>ONLY RECYCLABLES GOES IN THIS CART.</p> <p>NOTE: If this recycling cart is used for over flow garbage or other unauthorized waste, the City of Spartanburg will pick up the cart and discontinue your recycling service.</p> <p>NO</p>
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2

Reduce food waste.

Food waste remains the No. 1 item disposed of in the nation's landfills. At the same time more than 42 million Americans are food insecure.

DHEC debuted the Don't Waste Food SC (DWFSC) campaign in 2016 in response to this challenge. DWFSC is a collaborative campaign that brings together stakeholders dedicated to sharing knowledge, coordinating resources and working together to reduce food waste. It is designed to:

- **Increase the awareness of the economic, environmental and social impacts of wasted food;** and
- **Inspire individuals, communities, schools, businesses and others to take action through waste reduction, recovery and composting initiatives.**

The campaign is growing with the implementation of many of the recommendations from previous reports. In the past

FY, DHEC and the S.C. Department of Education began working together to promote food waste reduction in schools and provide technical assistance to address this issue. That work produced "Reducing Food Waste: A Guide for South Carolina Schools" and regional workshops targeting food service and cafeteria managers. (See below.)

DHEC also provided grant funding to schools and local governments targeting the issue, developed

a lesson for its kindergarten through 12th grade recycling curriculum and guide books for local government and college/university recycling professionals. In addition, the campaign and issue were incorporated into the S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program.

The work, however, has just begun. The following recommendations not only directly address the issues of food waste, but support the DWFSC campaign's statewide call to action asking everyone to do their part in achieving the goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030.



Steps to Consider

DHEC should continue its work with the S.C. Department of Education to promote food waste reduction in schools and provide technical assistance to address this issue. These efforts should include smart lunchroom strategies, use of share tables and donation.

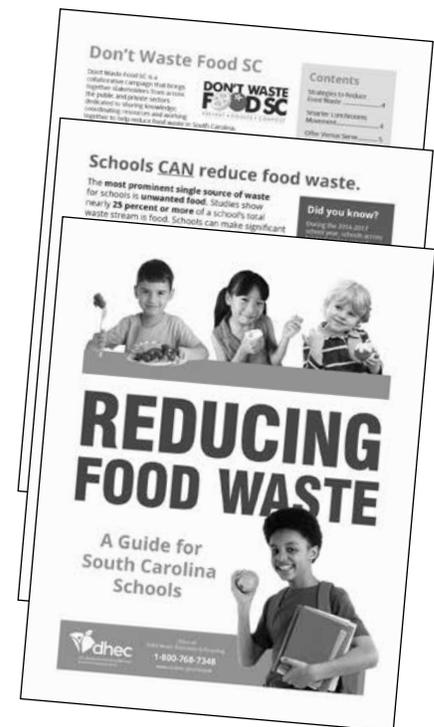
DHEC should conduct a school waste characterization study to determine the amount and composition of waste being generated and what could be recycled.

DHEC should continue to work with restaurants to promote best management practices to reduce food waste and encourage donation when possible by providing information on federal and state legislation that provides liability protection. This initiative should be implemented through the DWFSC campaign as well as through the S.C. Smart Business Program and other appropriate agency programs.

The S.C. Department of Commerce should continue to promote this issue and recruit companies that haul, process and manage organics to ensure infrastructure growth.

The S.C. Department of Commerce should continue its work with grocery stores to encourage donation and composting as well as participation in the DWFSC campaign.

Local government recycling programs should adopt and support the DWFSC campaign with a particular focus on what residents can do at home to reduce food waste. DHEC should continue to provide technical assistance to local governments to accomplish this work.



A new publication, "Reducing Food Waste: A Guide for South Carolina Schools" offers many options to reduce food waste. Please visit www.scdhec.gov/dontwastefoodsc to view the guide.