



SOUTH CAROLINA  
**SMART BUSINESS**

REDUCE • RECYCLE • REPORT

**A Guide to Reducing Waste & Recycling  
at Your Business**



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# What can Smart Business do for you?

The S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program (Smart Business) offers free, non-regulatory, confidential assistance by providing:

- **Site visits to assess waste reduction, reuse and recycling opportunities;**
- **Contacts for service providers and potential markets for recovered material and industrial by-products;**
- **A website with best practices and information on how and where to recycle, report and buy recycled-content products;**
- **Workshops, webinars and an electronic newsletter; and**
- **A statewide recognition program.**



# How can your business benefit?

Waste reduction and recycling not only conserve natural resources and help protect the environment, but also may benefit your business and support the state's recycling industry by:

- **Providing cost savings from reduced disposal and material costs;**
- **Providing potential revenue from the sale of recycled material; and**
- **Showing leadership and commitment in your community, possibly attracting new customers.**

# LET'S GET STARTED!

## The First Steps to Begin Recycling

There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to waste management. It also is important to remember that there is a cost to manage solid waste – whether through recycling or disposal. The cost to recycle, in general, can be less expensive than the cost of disposal.

### STEP 1: Secure management support.

Endorsements from management are critical as program goals are announced and a collection program begins.



Staff must feel that waste reduction is part of the “corporate culture” before they will change their behavior. Be sure to define the time, cost and scope of the project. Consider your company’s strategic plan and connect the program to its values. Start with a small goal. As the program grows, the goal will grow.

### STEP 2: Form a Green Team.

Once you have gained support from management, it is critical to get representatives from all areas of the organization to share ideas and opinions about how to reduce waste and recycle more.



This team is responsible for planning, implementing, maintaining and communicating about the waste reduction and recycling program and its goals.

## 8 Key Steps for Starting a Recycling Program

**1** Secure support from top management.



**2** Form a Green Team.



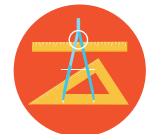
**3** Analyze the current waste stream.



**4** Identify waste reduction and recycling opportunities.



**5** Design a recycling program and acquire equipment.



**6** Launch the program.



**7** Educate and promote.



**8** Report recycling efforts.



**TIP** Know what can be recycled. When starting or continuing a recycling program, training employees on recycling initiatives is vital. Give incentives for not only recycling but recycling the right way. Knowing what can and cannot go into the bin makes recycling easier and encourages participation.

# REDUCE

## Become a Smart Business!

### STEP 3: Analyze the current solid waste system.

Here are some strategies to understand the current waste stream and management system.



**A. EXAMINE FACILITY RECORDS.** Checking records can provide insight into waste generation and disposal patterns as well as material brought into the facility. **Worksheet A\*** will help determine patterns and material. The types of records that can provide useful information include:

- **Purchasing records;**
- **Supply, equipment and maintenance records;**
- **Equipment service contracts;**
- **Repair invoices;** and
- **Waste hauling/recycling service records and contracts.**

**B. ORGANIZE A FACILITY WALK-THROUGH.** A facility walk-through can spur simple yet effective waste reduction and recycling ideas. Green Team members will need to make careful observations about the

operations and waste management systems currently in each area. Use **Worksheet B.\*** During the walk, the team should note:

- **The layout and operations of various departments;**
- **The types and relative amounts of waste generated;**
- **Inefficiencies in operations that might result in excess waste;**
- **Existing waste and recycling equipment;** and
- **Current waste reduction and recycling efforts.**

As part of the walk-through, consider performing a visual audit of each work area to observe waste-generating activities. Visual audits involve looking into trash cans and dumpsters and estimating the amount and types of waste generated. While not as thorough as a waste sort, visual audits are a good option when time is limited. Additional information can be obtained through interviews with supervisors and employees.



## Tips for a Successful Waste Audit



Receive approval from property management.



Help cleaning staff to find storage/sorting sites.



Schedule sort during a typical work day.



Assign specific roles to team members.



Don't "tip off" employees about the audit.



Don't collect waste on holidays or special events.

**\*NOTE:** Worksheets referenced throughout this guide are available at [scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](http://scdhec.gov/smartbusiness).

**C. CONDUCT A WASTE AUDIT.** Invaluable information can be gained by examining the types of waste being disposed of and recycled through a waste audit, also known as a waste sort. A waste audit:

- **Involves the physical collection, sorting and weighing of waste;**
- **Allows for examination of current waste reduction and recycling practices and quantification of their effectiveness;**
- **Establishes a baseline of data;** and
- **Identifies potential waste reduction and recycling options.**

A waste audit can focus on all of the waste generated by a business or can target certain work areas. It is important to conduct an audit when waste is representative of typical business activities. If waste generation varies significantly from one day to the next, consider sorting waste on more than one day. When conducting the audit, use **Worksheet C.\***

**D. ANALYZE THE RESULTS.** Once you complete the audit and have a better understanding of what waste is generated, you are ready to determine the best ways to reduce, reuse and recycle.

## STEP 4: Identify waste reduction opportunities.



Now that the Green Team has gathered information about the amounts and types of waste generated, the team can select necessary waste reduction and recycling measures to implement. The elimination or reduction of waste can occur through:

- **Source Reduction** – Avoiding generation of waste; and
- **Reuse** – The ability to use a material again in its original form.

Listed below are examples of ways to reduce waste.

- **Repair and reuse pallets, crates, boxes and buckets.**

- **Rent equipment that you use infrequently.**
- **Consider composting.** Composting greatly reduces waste while creating a valuable product that will decrease fertilizer and pesticide use.
- **Implement an environmentally preferred purchasing (EPP) policy** – which may lead to waste reduction opportunities. Common types of EPP include buying in bulk, buying products that have minimal packaging and using supplier/manufacturer take-back programs for items like toner cartridges.

## Five Simple Source Reduction Practices

Below are examples of ways to reduce waste at your business.

**1 Don't print unless absolutely necessary.** Use emails, bulletin boards and meetings to communicate.



**2 Set printers and copiers to print on both sides by default.**



**3 Send computer printer and copier toner cartridges to a remanufacturer.**



**4 Provide reusable flatware, plates and cups in cafeterias and break rooms instead of disposable paper and plastic items.**

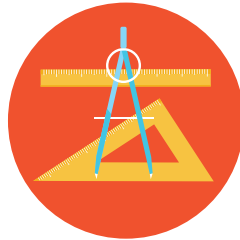
**5 Reduce the amount of unwanted mail you receive** by contacting the Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service at [DMAchoice.org](http://DMAchoice.org).



# RECYCLE

## Create a program for your business.

### STEP 5: Design a recycling program and acquire equipment.



After the Green Team has evaluated source reduction and reuse options, the next step is to set up a recycling program. Determine what can be recycled and if the recyclables can be picked up by a vendor or dropped off by a volunteer. It is best to interview a number of service providers. In some cases, local governments provide access to recycling programs – either through the use of drop-off sites or collection services.

Check with your county or city recycling coordinator to see what services may be offered. Some large businesses deal directly with single-commodity processors. This requires a greater level of effort, but can result in higher revenue for commodities. Contact local haulers/processors of recyclables to identify:

- **Material accepted and/or volume requirements;**

- **Service fees;**
- **Collection schedules;**
- **Equipment supplied; and**
- **Potential revenue sharing options.**

Many service providers will visit a facility to help plan the logistics of a recycling program.




#### EVALUATE AND SELECT PROGRAM OPTIONS.

Evaluation and program design (presented in the next section) are often conducted simultaneously so that cost estimates can be more accurate. In evaluating and selecting program options, businesses should estimate and analyze:

- **The quantity and types of waste that are expected to be reduced;**
- **Required capital costs** (material moving and storage equipment);
- **Required ongoing costs** (any added labor, hauling costs, container rental costs as

**RECYCLING** is the second step of the Smart Business Recycling Program after reducing.

## Examples of Recycling Collection Containers

Point-of-Generation (deskside) Containers	Intermediate Recycling Containers	Point-of-Collection Containers
For depositing recyclable material where it is generated.	For consolidating material into fewer, more centrally located containers.	To consolidate all material for pickup at one outdoor location.
		

well as costs associated with training and outreach such as labor and printing, implementing and tracking program success);

- **Estimated cost savings** (avoided disposal costs); and
- **Estimated revenues from the sale of commodities.**

## Preparation is key.



1. Identify container locations.



2. Select and purchase recycling containers.



3. Create an internal collection/routing schedule.



4. Purchase any necessary equipment.



5. Ensure that storage space is adequate.



6. Decide when collection is needed by expected volume.



7. Establish contracts with service providers.



8. Establish a monitoring system.



9. When ready, schedule the program roll out.

Next, meet with upper management and obtain implementation approval. Highlight benefits of the program and point out the goals and mission statement that the program aims to support. See Worksheets D and E\* for examples.

## STEP 6: Launch the program.



Now the Green Team is ready to launch the program. The following activities can help make it a success.

### A. PROMOTE PROGRAM LAUNCH.

A kick-off event can be a great way to introduce employees to the program and generate enthusiasm as well as review program details. This can be a stand-alone event or held in conjunction with a related state or national environmental event (such as America Recycles Day – November 15 or Earth Day – April 22).

### B. DESIGN AND DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL DEVICES.

- **Design program logos and slogans** to place on posters, stickers and pens that will encourage colleagues to recycle.
- **Order the promotional items** before the program launch date.
- **Ensure senior management's commitment to the program** is incorporated in the launch.

### C. ENSURE SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE.

Before launching the program, ensure all of the following elements are in place:

- **Containers are situated according to the plan and workstation containers distributed;**

**TIP** **Train custodial staff.** To make training sessions short and efficient – lasting no more than 10 minutes at the beginning of a shift – a detailed procedure sheet can be developed explaining what materials are recycled, how they are collected and where to place for pick-up. Schedule a follow-up meeting a few weeks later to provide an opportunity to receive feedback. The feedback can be used as possible action items to improve recycling procedures.

- Any necessary signage is displayed on or nearby containers showing what material is accepted;
- Custodial services have a floor plan indicating container locations and are trained regarding the program;
- A contract or service agreement has been established with the recycling service providers including price and schedule;
- A system is in place for the Green Team to monitor and record the success of the program as well as to provide feedback; and
- A method of sharing program results with all participants has been established.

- D. **DISTRIBUTE PERSONAL RECYCLING RECEPTACLES AND PLACE INTERMEDIATE CONTAINERS.** After training has taken place, ensure that deskside recycling containers are distributed to individuals to place at their workstations and in common areas as planned. If employees will be required to empty their own deskside containers, remind them of this during distribution. Let them know where the nearest intermediate containers are located.

## STEP 7: Educate and promote.

### A. PLAN AND SCHEDULE TRAINING SESSIONS.

Training is critical to the program's success. Employees will be made aware of the program, encouraged to take responsibility and foster pride in the company's goals.



- Have each Green Team member directly involved in training to spread enthusiasm and sell the program.
- Develop a short presentation on how the program works. Initial sessions should be conducted just before the launch date. It should include descriptions and benefits of the source reduction, reuse and recycling opportunities as well as contact information.
- Work through senior management to ensure all new employees are informed about the waste reduction and recycling program and their role. This can be done during new employee orientation.

**TIP** **Twin the bin.** Always place recycling containers next to trash cans. This reminds users that there is a choice and prevents a recycling container from turning into a trash can.

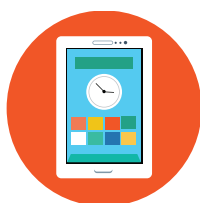
Work with your hauler to understand which types of collection containers are compatible with their collection vehicles.



## Keep your recycling program on track.



Develop training and outreach ideas.



Determine phase-in schedule for these activities.



Solicit feedback from staff and resolve any issues.



Keep in contact with service vendors.



Track program results and report to county yearly.



Keep upper management informed.



**B. DEVELOP AN ONGOING TRAINING AND OUTREACH PLAN.** Keeping the program dynamic can help motivate employees to continue their waste reduction and recycling activities. Here are some suggestions.

- **Create a program logo and/or slogan** to foster recognition.
- **Add fresh posters and outreach messages** over time to ensure that the program does not stagnate.
- **Develop additional recycling strategies** and implement them as the program matures.
- **Survey staff to find out what they think of the recycling program.** The results of the survey should highlight problematic areas from their perspective allowing you to focus on improving specific parts of the program.
- **Recognize the efforts of outstanding recyclers.**
- **Send regular email messages.**
- **Boost employee participation with incentives** such as:
  - Set an office or building-wide goal and provide rewards when it is met;
  - Track progress with a highly visible display;
  - Award prizes to the divisions/floors with the highest participation or most material collected;
  - Donate any revenue gained to a local charitable organization or social fund; and
  - Hold internal recognition events.

**C. CONSIDER EXPANDING THE PROGRAM.** Consider focusing on other sustainable practices such as maximizing energy and water efficiency. Businesses pay for the amount of energy and water used, so they are controllable expenses. The practices provided on the following are recommended for use at your facility.

## Green Purchasing

Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP) or Green Purchasing is generally defined as purchasing a product that has a lesser or reduced negative effect or increased positive effect on human health and the environment, when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose.

Below are some areas where EPP can be incorporated.

**1** Evaluate service providers to learn where their products come from and if they have green policies (e.g., a landscaper who uses electric-powered equipment or composts).



**2** Consider installing automatic lights in spaces that are not often occupied. Also apply this to computers, printers and other equipment.



**3** Purchase products that are not hazardous to the environment or human health.



**4** Source products and materials locally. This can reduce shipping costs and environmental emissions from shipping.



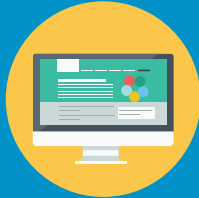
**5** Buy office supplies that are good for the environment or contain recycled content (e.g., paper, pens).



## Eco-Friendly Tips for Your Business

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- **Turn off lights** when not in use or when natural daylight is sufficient.
- **Activate sleep settings on all equipment** so they automatically enter a low-powered sleep mode when inactive.
- **Adjust thermostats for seasonal changes.**



### AIR QUALITY

- **Discourage vehicle idling**, particularly in parking lots and loading areas.
- **Consider using hybrid or alternative-fuel vehicles.**
- **Properly maintain heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems.**



### WATER CONSERVATION

- **Use plants and grasses that are native to South Carolina for landscaping.**
- **Install faucet aerators at sinks.**
- **Find and fix any leaks to prevent water loss.**



## Become a Don't Waste Food SC Ambassador!

### IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

**1 PARTICIPATE.** Do your part to prevent, donate or compost excess food. Everyone can do something.



**2 PROMOTE.** Spread the word about Don't Waste Food SC. In return we'll tell your story via our website and social media pages, publications and presentations.



**3 APPLY.** Fill out a simple checklist about your food waste reduction efforts and how you plan to share the campaign at [scdhec.gov/dwfcscambassador](http://scdhec.gov/dwfcscambassador).



Learn more at [scdhec.gov/dwfcsc](http://scdhec.gov/dwfcsc).

**DON'T WASTE  
FOOD SC**  
PREVENT • DONATE • COMPOST



@dontwastefoodsc

**TIP** **Inspire friendly competition.** Create waste reduction and recycling contests and offer prizes. Measure each team's material by weight or volume and cleanliness (to help decrease contamination).



# REPORT

## Your recycling data is needed.

### STEP 8: Report recycling efforts.

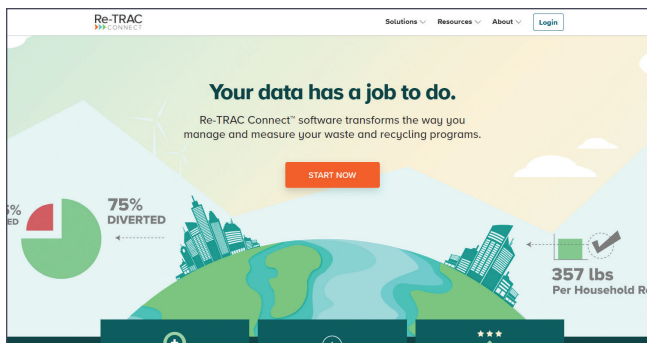
South Carolina's goal is to recycle 40 percent of its waste by 2030. By reporting your recycling activities, your business can help the state reach its goal. It's smart business to report what and how much your company recycles.

Smart Business offers a free, confidential and easy-to-use online reporting system called Re-TRAC Connect. This online data management system allows businesses to enter, manage and report essential recycling data.

Please register at [connect.re-trac.com/register/scsmartbusiness](https://connect.re-trac.com/register/scsmartbusiness) to start using Re-TRAC Connect.



**REPORTING**  
your recycling efforts and data is the third, yet most important step of the Smart Business Recycling Program after reducing and recycling.



## Smart Business Awards

Recognize your staff and facility for their recycling efforts. Apply for a Smart Business Recycling Award!



Each year the Smart Business Recycling Program recognizes Outstanding Waste Reduction & Recycling efforts throughout South Carolina.

The state has a 40 percent recycling rate goal to reach by 2030, which can only be accomplished if businesses reduce waste, recycle and report their progress.

Smart Business Award Applicants are required to report their recycling efforts and data for the S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report.

Learn more at [scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](https://scdhec.gov/smartbusiness) or call 1-800-768-7348.

**TIP** Keep track of how much is recycled. Keep a spreadsheet or tracking sheet for amount (in tons) of material recycled at your business. This will give you a good idea of where there can be improvement and makes it easier when reporting data for the S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report.



**NOTE** For all worksheets mentioned in this guide as well as other tips and information, visit [scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](https://scdhec.gov/smartbusiness).

# Recycling Resources

## S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program

Website ..... [scdhec.gov/smartbusiness](http://scdhec.gov/smartbusiness)

Email ..... [smartbiz@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:smartbiz@dhec.sc.gov)

## S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)

Website ..... [scdhec.gov](http://scdhec.gov)

Email ..... [info@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:info@dhec.sc.gov)

## DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

Telephone..... **1-800-768-7348**

Website ..... [scdhec.gov/recycle](http://scdhec.gov/recycle)

## Don't Waste Food SC

Website ..... [scdhec.gov/dwfs](http://scdhec.gov/dwfs)

## Recycle Right SC

Website ..... [recyclerightsc.org](http://recyclerightsc.org)

Email ..... [recyclelocal@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:recyclelocal@dhec.sc.gov)

## PalmettoPride/Keep South Carolina Beautiful

Telephone..... **1-877-PAL-PRDE**

Litter Busters Hot Line ..... **1-877-7LITTER**

Website ..... [palmettopride.org](http://palmettopride.org)

Email ..... [info@palmettopride.org](mailto:info@palmettopride.org)



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## About the Office

DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) was created by the S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act). The Act – prioritizing recovery over disposal – outlines specific responsibilities for the Office that include providing technical assistance, outreach/education programs and campaigns as well as grant funding to local governments, K-12 schools and colleges/universities. Key programs and campaigns include Recycle Right SC, the Recycle Guys, Don't Waste Food SC, the S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program, the Green Government Initiative, Recycle U and Take Action SC. The Office also produces several reports including the "S.C. Solid Waste Management Annual Report."

"South Carolina Smart Business Recycling: A Guide to Reducing Waste & Recycling at Your Business" is published by the Office. Learn more at [scdhec.gov/recycle](http://scdhec.gov/recycle) or call **1-800-768-7348**.

Editor..... **Kayte B. Deal**

Layout/Graphics..... **Gregg Glymph**

Contributors..... **Richard Chesley, Amanda Edwards and Adah Gorton**