



South Carolina
Department of Commerce

Just right for recycling.

How to Recycle Textiles for Manufacturers (or Large Companies)

South Carolina has a long history being a leader in the textile and reclaimed fiber recycling industry creating a value chain for markets like automotive, construction, home furnishings and other textiles. Our state has the nation's largest textile recyclers, creating a valuable supply chain and expanding the useful life of materials produced by textile and other related manufacturers. Collection methods range from donation centers, thrift/consignment stores, donation boxes, curbside programs and retail stores. Collected textiles are sorted by these recyclers into different grades and types of materials from reusable, resalable goods, or recyclable to non-usable goods. Almost half (45%) of collected textiles are sold and reused as secondhand apparel, 30% of materials are remade into wiping and polishing cloths, and 20% are reprocessed into fiber materials.

Materials Accepted¹

- ◇ Any clothing, shoes, purses, household textile (bedding, curtains, pillows, table linens, towels, cloth napkins), stuffed animals, pet beds and clothing, or commercial linen textile.
- ◇ Items can be stained, torn, and/or overly worn.

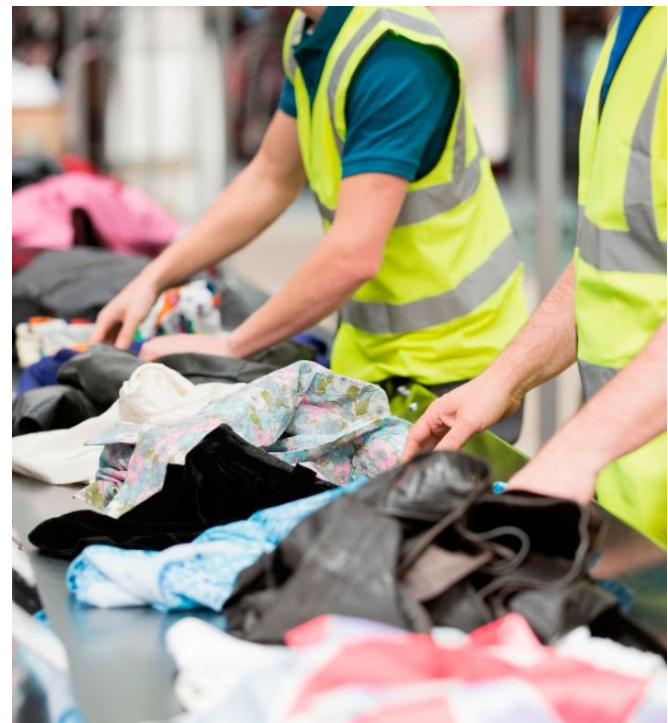
How to Recycle Textiles: Questions a Recycling Company May Ask

- ◇ What type of fiber?
 - Examples: PET (polyethylene terephthalate), Nylon, PP (Polypropylene), and etc.
- ◇ What's your monthly volume by type? (Volume preferred: tracker-trailer load)
- ◇ What color is the material?
- ◇ Are you able to separate out the white textiles? (Keeping white textiles separated by material type may increase the material grade compared to mixed colors.)
- ◇ Does your business have space to store the material?
- ◇ How is the material contained? (ex: baled, loose, etc.)

Pictures and/or samples of the material(s) are always helpful, and will likely be requested.

How to Recycle Properly

- ◇ Keep the textiles clean of plastics and other non-fiber contaminants.
- ◇ Textiles must be dry and have no odor.¹
- ◇ Understand individual and/or commercial sustainability goals in order to create your programs.
- ◇ Bale material when possible.



¹Secondary Materials and Recycling Textiles (2021) [Frequently Asked Questions](#)



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What is Contamination?

- ◇ Anything that is not a textile material.
- ◇ Textiles cannot be wet, mildewed, or have been used with a solvent-type liquid.¹
- ◇ Clean material will yield the highest value. As material becomes mixed with other products the value decreases.

Recent Innovations

- ◇ Fashion brands have chosen to use recycle materials to make their products.
 - Prada Re-Nylon is entirely crafted from a regenerated nylon created through the recycling and purification of plastic collected from oceans, fishing nets, landfills, and textile fiber waste globally. Through a process of de-polymerization, purification and then transformation into new polymers and then threads, this material can be recuperated and made into new nylon fabric.



End Products Created

- ◇ New clothes, insulation, non-wovens, wiping rags, furniture batting, carpet underlay, automotive interiors, new textiles, industrial cloths, textile filling for mattresses, and etc.

Additional Resources

- ◇ [Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles \(SMART\)](#)
- ◇ [Smart Business Recycling Program](#) – If you recycle, make sure to report it!
- ◇ [Recycling in SC](#)



For more details, please visit the [SC Recycling Markets Directory](#) or contact us at recycling@sccommerce.com.



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