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# Textile Recycling - CTDEEP



**SECONDARY MATERIALS  
AND RECYCLED TEXTILES**

*The Association of Wiping Materials, Used Clothing and Fiber Industries*





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## SMART Background

- SMART – what does it stand for?
- Nonprofit trade association, established in 1932
- Used clothing, wiping material, fiber companies
- Nearly 200 companies worldwide
- Committed to “green” way of life



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## SMART's Vision

SMART is the leading industry voice promoting high standards and best practices for reducing solid waste by recycling textiles and related secondary materials. Our members collect, reclaim, and “close the loop” by processing, converting, and distributing these recyclables.

***“SMART was Green before Green was Smart”***

*- Larry Groipen, SMART Past-President*





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# Use of the Term Recycling Within the Textiles Industries

The industry tends to use the words recycled and reused interchangeably.

The clothing that is sold in charity thrift store and sold to developing nations would be considered “reuse”

The textiles that are turned into wiping rags and the textiles that are ground up into fiber would be considered recycled.



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# Can Textiles Be Recycled? **Yes!**

- Oldest form of recycling
- Annually...
  - Average person discards 70 lbs of clothing
  - SMART/charities divert 2.5 billion lbs. of waste
  - SMART is reducing the world's carbon footprint
  - Only 15% of textiles currently being diverted
- Remember – donate, recycle, don't throw away!



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## How does SMART Recycle?

- Reduce solid waste through life extension
- Reuse gently worn clothing
- Recycle old garments and convert fiber



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## Where Does Recycled Clothing Go?

- 45% used for secondhand apparel
- 30% become wiping and polishing cloths
- 20% reprocessed into fibers
- 5% is unusable



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# The Lifecycle of Rags



Consumers determine clothing, shoes, purses, etc., are no longer needed.

Recycled textiles return to the consumer as home insulation, carpet padding, re-worn clothing and rags.

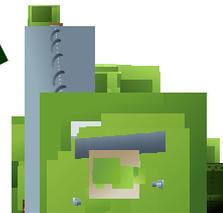
The recycling processes of SMART companies **rely largely on human labor and are far less energy/water/resource-intensive** or polluting than other recycle industries

SMART's membership companies **prevent more than 2.5 billion lbs. of post consumer textile waste from hitting the solid waste stream** each year.



It is estimated that **only 15% of textile materials are being diverted** from the waste stream for recycling purposes. More can and must be done to recapture these vital resources

Nearly 99% of donated textiles are recycled. The materials separated into 3 grades:  
 Usable Clothing (45%)  
 Wiping Cloth Grades (30%)  
 Fiber Conversion Grades (24%)



Consumer donates items to charity or recycles with municipality.



Charity sells 10-20% of donated items at storefront locations. Charity generates additional revenue by selling salvage materials (95%) to Rag Brokers, Rag Graders or Foreign Rag Graders.



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## Today's Definition of Acceptable Textiles

Any clothing, household textile or commercial linen textile as long as it is DRY and has NO Odor can be reused and recycled.



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## Acceptable Items Include:

Bedding: comforter, sheets, pillow cases, blankets

Belts

Backpacks

Boots

Bras

Coats

Curtains/Draperies

Dresses

Flip flops

Halloween costumes

Hats

Jackets

Jeans

Jerseys (sports)

Napkins (cloth)

Pajamas

Pants

Pet beds & clothing

Pillows

Purses

Scarves

Shirts

Shoes (single or in pairs)

Shorts

Skirts

Slippers

Socks (single or in pairs)

Stuffed animals

Suits

Sweaters

Sweatpants

Sweatshirts

Table linens

Ties

Towels

T-shirts

Undergarments



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# How Are Textiles Reuse & Recycling Industries Different Today

The industry ( process) has not changed in hundreds of years.

What has changed is the industry is becoming more transparent and now being recognized by both Charities and regulators as having a positive environmental impact as a recyclable and an economic sector.



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## Why Recycle Textiles

- Carbon footprint reduction
- Clean air preservation
- Reduce energy consumption
- Water conservation
- Woodland conservation
- 5.2% of waste stream is currently made up of clothing and household textiles; adds up to over 10 million tons thrown away annually



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## Why Recycle Textiles

“The EPA estimates that between 1999 & 2009 the amount of textiles in our landfills grew by 40% from 9.1 Million Tons to 12.73 Million Tons. Yet textile diversion only grew by 2%, from 12.9% to 14.9%.”



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## Textile Recycling Drives Economy

- Revenue stream for recycling agencies
- Creates jobs
- Funds charitable initiatives
- Promotes small business
- Encourages recycled product development
- Provides affordable clothing opportunity



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## Can Businesses Recycle Textiles? **Yes**

- Healthcare facilities
- Hotels and hospitality facilities
- Textile & paper mills/manufacturers
- Cut and sew plants
- Textile dye facilities
- Retail stores
- Government agencies
- Recycling textiles is **EVERYONE'S** business!



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## SMART's Goals

1. Increase awareness of need to recycle textiles
2. Increase supply of textiles in marketplace
3. Decrease the amount of clothing and textiles in landfills
4. Offer help and expertise to government in developing programs to promote textile recycling and help find recycling company partners
5. Reduce cost to municipalities by reducing tipping fees associated with textile waste disposal
6. Funds raised by clothing collection can be used by communities for community projects, school programs and recycling education
7. Capture remaining 85% of textiles that are not being recycled – Donate, Recycle, Don't Throw Away.



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## Recent SMART Initiatives - Legislative

- Clothing Collection Bins in the Community
  - Draft Ordinance Language
  - Position Paper
  - Code of Conduct for SMART-Member Companies



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## Recent SMART Initiatives - Communication

- Television PSA
  - Community Recycling of Clothing and Textiles
  - 60:second spot
- Radio PSAs
  - 4 versions, 30:seconds each
  - Scripts include: Back-to-School  
Earth Day  
Spring Cleaning  
End-of-the-Semester





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## Recent SMART Initiatives - Education

- Lesson Plans for Elementary Students
  - Grade Appropriate for students Grades K-5
  - Available free from Education Center website
  - Goal to reach 750,000 educators, 15 million students, and 20 million parents





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## Council For Textile Recycling

- Sister organization to SMART; 501c3 charitable org
- Membership open to municipalities, states, government agencies at no charge
- Goal is to educate public about textile recycling and to promote zero textile waste in landfills by 2037
- Members also include apparel manufacturers and retailers, charities, academics and textile recycling companies
- [www.weardonaterecycle.org](http://www.weardonaterecycle.org)



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## How Can You Help?

- Provide convenient collection points
- Promote textile recycling days
  - Earth Day
  - America Recycles Day
  - End-of-the-Semester (partner with local colleges)
- Include textile recycling in all public relations and promotion efforts supporting recycling programs
- Help educate the recycling public about textile recycling
- Encourage public agencies to use products made from recycled textiles



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## Questions?

Contact SMART

Jackie King, Executive Director

443-640-1050 x105

[jackie@ksgroup.org](mailto:jackie@ksgroup.org)

[www.SMARTasn.org](http://www.SMARTasn.org)

Or

Larry Groipen, ERC Wiping Products

SMART PAST PRESIDENT - (781) 593-4000

[larry@ercwipe.com](mailto:larry@ercwipe.com)

Thank you!

**SMART**