

GREENWorks

Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

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Donating Old Clothes? Include Items in Poor Condition

Most people know they can donate their unwanted clothes to organizations that will give them to those in need or resell them at inexpensive prices, but not too many people know what to do with the items that are in bad condition. What do you do with the mismatched socks or that ratty old curtain? What about the clothes with holes and stains? You can recycle them!

Often mistaken as general trash, textiles make up about 5% of landfills. We are all pretty familiar with the recycling of plastics, aluminum, and other packaging material; however clothing is considered foreign territory. According to the EPA, in 2014, only about 16% of the 16,220 tons of textiles produced were recycled. Of the amount produced, 10,460 tons were landfilled – more than half. All clothing can be recycled, regardless of quality or condition. Recycling clothing and textiles reduces solid waste in landfills, reduces carbon footprint and demonstrates sustainability.

There are a number of businesses and organizations involved with collecting used clothing and textiles. They either sell them second hand, or reuse them as rags or blended fabric that is reprocessed. Here are a few to look for in your area:



- **Goodwill Industries:** Goodwill will take textiles and shoes in any condition. That stained shirt, the one missing sock, and those curtains torn up by your dog, can all go to Goodwill to be recycled.
- **Planet Aid:** Planet Aid donation drop boxes are located all over the country. These boxes take clothes in any condition and get sorted accordingly.
- **H&M:** H&M stores are providing garment-collecting boxes in all locations for textiles and clothing of any brand, in any condition. As a bonus, H&M will reward you with a voucher for helping keep textiles out of landfills.
- **Transfer Stations:** Contact your local transfer station and check if they take clothing or textiles.
**Please do not recycle wet or contaminated clothes before checking with the collector.*

Your old clothes and sheets don't need to go to the trash just because they aren't in good condition. Instead, check in your area for organizations that will recycle your unwanted textiles and clothes.

Tweet us at @NHDES to show us how you keep clothes and textiles out of landfills!

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