



SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Green Paper: Unwanted Clothing FAQ

Prepared by the Sustainability Advisory Committee

Determining the best way to dispose of unused, unusable clothing and other textiles can sometimes be challenging. Many people are familiar with organizations like Goodwill, which accept donations of lightly used clothing. Consignment stores accept your items and compensate you upon sale. But what about fabric or clothing that is too worn or damaged to be reused?

While repurposing old blankets, sheets, and towels into rags is one option, it is not always sustainable, especially when they start to accumulate faster than they can be used. Simply throwing these items in the trash contributes to the growing problem of textile waste, which fills landfills and takes years to decompose. The Environmental Protection Agency offers 2018 data on its website:

The recycling rate for all textiles was 14.7 percent in 2018, with 2.5 million tons recycled. Within this figure, EPA estimated that the recycling rate for textiles in clothing and footwear was 13 percent based on information from the American Textile Recycling Service. The rate for items such as sheets and pillowcases was 15.8 percent in 2018.

The total amount of textiles in MSW [Municipal Solid waste] combusted in 2018 was 3.2 million tons. This was 9.3 percent of MSW combusted with energy recovery.

Landfills received 11.3 million tons of MSW textiles in 2018. This was 7.7 percent of all MSW landfilled. (Environmental Protection Agency¹)

For reference, Del Mar generates 9,800 tons of solid waste annually, where 3,200 tons of this waste are recycled².

Instead of tossing textiles out, consider reusing them as much as possible. To give your old items a second life, we are proposing below local donation and resale options to reuse, recycle, or repurpose. When in doubt, *I Love a Clean San Diego*³ is a comprehensive resource that helps locate solutions for donating or proper disposal of several types of items, including textiles. Our waste hauler, EDCO,

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/textiles-material-specific-data>

² <https://www.delmar.ca.us/675/Zero-Waste>

³ <https://wastefreesd.org/>

through its *Where Does it Go*⁴ interactive resource, can help answer disposal questions about unwanted items.

Item	Disposal Options, Conditions & Exclusions
Unwanted clothes, textiles, and shoes	Goodwill of San Diego ⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or used clothing accepted. • Wet or soiled clothing is not accepted.
	EDCO Buyback Center ⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted textiles and clothing do not belong in the recycling cart. • Buyback Recycling Centers have Goodwill bins to drop off unwanted textiles.
	St-Peters Thrift Shop ⁷ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and gently used, clean and in good condition.
	Swap and gift through a community group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swap Meet⁸: Local communities organize regular events. • Buy Nothing Carmel Valley (West) Del Mar group⁹: micro economy where participants gift items to one another. • Nextdoor.com¹⁰: local platform where to sell or gift items.
Unwanted clothes and textiles	H&M stores ¹¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop off unwanted textiles in a bag at the cashier and receive a thank-you coupon. • Any brand, any condition.
Designer or High-End Clothing	Contact the retail clothing stores for specifics condition, brands requirements, and purchase protocols. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolyn's Designer Resale¹² • June Bug¹³ (children) • La Costa Kids¹⁴ (children)

⁴ <https://san-diego.edcodisposal.com/resource-center/where-does-it-go/>

⁵ <https://sdgoodwill.org/donate/donate-goods/>

⁶ <https://san-diego.edcodisposal.com/public-facilities/>

⁷ <https://www.stpetersdelmar.net/thriftshop>

⁸ <https://www.sandiego.com/things-to-do/shopping/swap-meets/>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/443332687110466>

¹⁰ https://nextdoor.com/for_sale_and_free/

¹¹ http://www2.hm.com/en_us/sustainability-at-hm/our-work/close-the-loop.html

¹² <https://www.carolynsdesignerresale.com/>

¹³ <https://www.junebugoncedros.com/preparing-your-dropoff>

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/lacostakids/>

As we assess how to dispose of unused items, reducing¹⁵ our consumption or “taking less”, has an even greater impact on the environment by sourcing less raw material, using less energy to manufacture and transport goods, and avoiding end-of-life disposals. The EPA encourages self-reflection before making a purchase through its "Think Green Before You Shop"¹⁶ materials, prompting consumers to consider whether they truly need an item.

¹⁵ <https://www.delmar.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8949/121423-Reduce-Reuse-Recycle>

¹⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/think-green-you-shop-full-infographic-image-jpg>