

## What is Textile Recycling?

In addition to clothing, the term “textile” also includes bedding, backpacks, curtains, towels, shoes, and more! Most textiles, such as apparel, linens, and other fabrics, can be reused or recycled into new products rather than thrown away. It is important to collect and recover textiles separately, as they do not belong in mixed recycling bins that accept bottles, cans, and paper. Placing textiles in mixed recycling bins contaminates the load, causing recycling facility shutdowns by getting tangled in the equipment, risking worker injuries to clean it out, and extra costs.



Depending on the type, quantity, and quality of the textiles, businesses will have different opportunities for textile recycling. Textiles can be reused if they are clean and odorless, while those that are wet, moldy, or contaminated with hazardous liquids will not be accepted by recovery outlets and need to be put in the trash.

## What Happens to Recycled and Reused Textiles?

Most textile collectors, charity organizations, and processors will separate out material that can be re-sold or reused as-is. There are both domestic and international reuse outlets for these items. The remaining material can be converted into industrial wiping cloths, car seats, shredded and converted into new products such as insulation, carpet padding and more!



## Why Recycle Textiles?

In Connecticut, we dispose of about **96,500** tons of textiles every year in our waste-to-energy facilities. This costs Connecticut municipalities and taxpayers close to **\$5.7 million** in unnecessary disposal tipping fees<sup>1</sup>. We have a significant opportunity to avoid disposal tipping fees, increase economic value, and reduce the environmental impact of waste and energy usage by recovering more textiles. Donating items for reuse also makes necessities like clothing and bedding more affordable. The [Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection \(CT DEEP\)](https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Reduce-Reuse-Recycle/Textiles-Reuse--Recycling) has more information on the basics and benefits of textile recycling.

1. <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Reduce-Reuse-Recycle/Textiles-Reuse--Recycling>

## How to Start Recycling Your Textiles

A business's recycling program will likely be based on the quantity of textiles recycled on a regular basis. Generators in Commercial Laundry or Manufacturing will have larger volumes that can be handled by a textile recycler. Medium generators like those in clothing retail or distribution may have quantities that can be collected in a scheduled pick-up. Smaller generators, like tailors, may be best suited for an as-needed drop-off. The following chart outlines the variations in a textile waste management plan based on the quantity generated:

### Large Generators

- Typical quantity: 10+ yards per week of textiles
- Suggested solution: Collect textiles in bags, gaylords, or bales and contract a textile recycler to collect on a weekly or monthly basis

### Medium Generators

- Typical quantity: Less than 10 yards a week
- Suggested solution: Collect textiles in bags or bins and work with a textile recycler for periodic pick-ups as needed

### Small Generators

- Typical quantity: 5 yards a week or less
- Suggested solution: Donate textiles to Salvation Army or similar thrift stores for reuse, or drop off at textile recycling centers

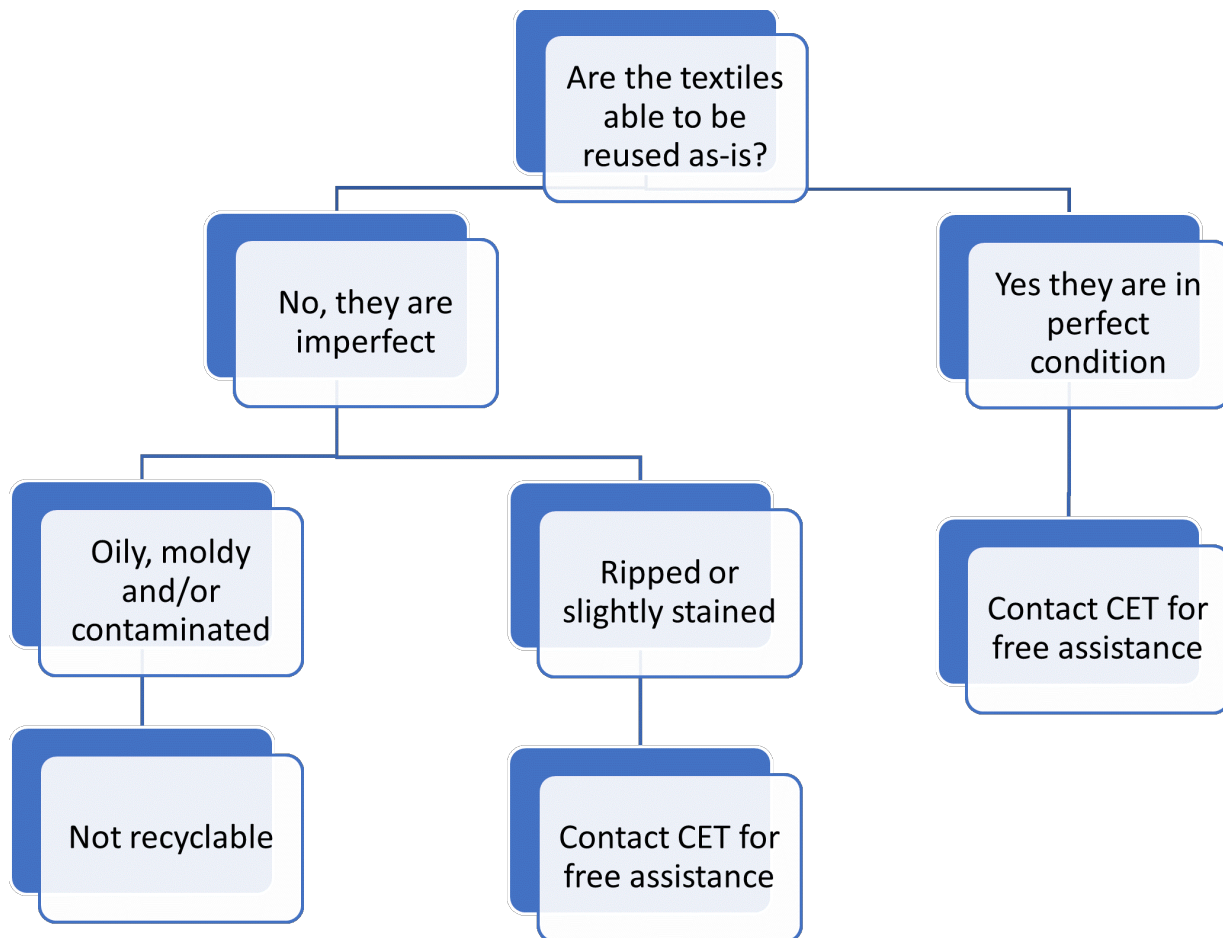
## Types of Materials That Can Be Recycled

Textile Recyclers will take almost anything – even items that are ripped or stained (but not moldy or dirty). This includes clothing, footwear, bedding, towels, curtains, fabric or similar. Businesses and textile recyclers have found that about 85% of material can often be reused.

Plastic film from packaged linens or similar materials can also be baled separately and recycled.







## Request Assistance from the Center for EcoTechnology (CET)

CET is under contract with CT DEEP to help businesses and institutions reduce waste, increase reuse and recycling of materials and reduce, donate excess edible food, and divert food scraps.

If your business would like help improving your recycling program for textiles or other materials, use CET as a resource. CET can work with businesses and haulers to implement a program, including training, signage, and explanation of the recycling laws at no cost.

To request assistance, call CET's hotline at **888-410-3827** or email [ReduceWasteCT@cetonline.org](mailto:ReduceWasteCT@cetonline.org)