



Laundry and Textile Management

According to the US EPA, the greatest source of textiles in municipal solid waste (MSW) is discarded clothing. In 2018, more than one million tons of textiles were disposed in California landfills. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) defines “textiles” to include cloth, rags, clothing, towels, sheets, rope, shoes, purses, and belts made from natural and synthetic fibers. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation puts global textile industry emissions at 1.2 billion tons of CO2 equivalent per-year, which is nearly equivalent to emissions from 1.3 million cars driving on the road each year. The energy used to repair, wash, and reuse textiles is substantially less than



manufacturing new items. Methods to reduce, reuse, and repair textiles will reduce the environmental impacts of textile manufacturing.

There are various methods to reduce, reuse, and repair textiles. A facility may consider contracting with a laundry service provider to have linens or uniforms picked up, washed, and then returned. Some facilities may benefit from purchasing a washer and dryer. Other best management practices include purchasing recycled textiles such as carpet and rags, donating or repurposing garments and bedding, and using high-quality, non-toxic cleaners that extend the life of fabrics.

Tips, Resources, and Assistance



Start a Textile Recycling Program for your facility: dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/ge/documents/ProjectResources/GE%20Textile%20Event%20Guide.pdf



Find a local textile recycler using Los Angeles County’s useful look-up tool: ladpw.org/epd/sbr/



For surplus donation contact Countywide Surplus Equipment Program at: **323-267-2339**



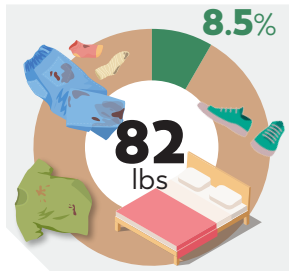
Find more uses for reusing textiles: fire.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HHMD-Fact-Sheet-Used-Textile-Management.pdf

1.2 million tons of textiles are disposed in California per year including clothing, footwear, linens, towels, and other fabrics.



Source: 2018 Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California dated May 15, 2020

The average person disposes of 82 pounds per year of textiles and only 8.5% get reused or recycled.



Source: Generation Earth Textile Recycling Guide dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/ge/documents/ProjectResources/GE%20Textile%20Event%20Guide.pdf

Californians spend more than \$70 million dollars annually disposing of used textiles.



Source: [SMARTASN/assets/File/resources/SMARTASN_PressKitOnline.pdf](https://smartasn.org/assets/File/resources/SMARTASN_PressKitOnline.pdf) calrecycle.ca.gov/reducewaste/textiles smartasn.org/

Donate used clothing, blankets, and other textiles at local non-profits and animal shelters.





Los Angeles County Facilities Case Studies

Repair and Reuse Textiles

Laundry repair and reuse services can greatly reduce the amount of textiles sent to landfills. At the Twin Towers Correctional Facility, textiles are washed, repaired, and then returned by the contracted service. This maintains and extends the life of garments and bedding.

The facility places designated bins on each floor and in multiple locations for convenient collection of dirty linens. Once the bins are full, the contents are transferred into cloth bags and staged for collection by the contracted service. Linens that are too damaged for repair are removed and donated to a textile recycler to be made into rags and other products such as fiber-fill. There are many local organizations that may accept used textiles, such as housing shelters and animal rescue facilities.



Reuse Event Linens

Reusable tablecloths, napkins, and table skirts can enhance decor and help ensure that single use foodservice ware products do not end up in the landfill. The Los Verdes Golf Course in Palos Verdes has a sit-down restaurant and hosts special events, which use washable linens. Initially, the cost of purchasing washable linens was more expensive than disposables. However, when comparing the ongoing costs of purchasing and disposing disposables, the reusable linen option quickly made sense.



Linen rental services are an option for event venues. Keep in mind that there will be an initial purchase investment; however, over time the cost should be recouped through reductions associated with repeated use.

Reuse Rags and Towels



Los Angeles County Fire Stations wash and dry fire trucks using reusable cloth rags. This is an excellent example of cost savings and waste reduction for facilities that maintain vehicles. The volume of towels used is minimal, so each station is able to manage the washing and drying on-site.

Collection bins are set-up in a convenient location and labeled for "clean" and "dirty" rags. Services are also available that swap-out dirty rags with clean ones. This is a good option if there is no washer and dryer on-site or if there are concerns that dirt and oils will stain work uniforms or other items that need service. Rags can be purchased through a service, or acquired by contacting local thrift shops to pick up donated clothing that is not saleable.

Wash and Reuse Hospital Linens

Multiple Los Angeles County facilities reuse bedding, uniforms and personal linens. These include hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, social services and fire stations. One example is the Pomona Health Center, where soiled lab and technician coats are collected and laundered, then returned for reuse.

The Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center has switched to using textiles that can be washed and reused, including bed liners, patient gowns, laboratory coats, and other hospital uniforms. At this facility, items are collected in rolling carts labeled specifically for textiles. A laundering service picks up the carts at the same time as dropping off clean textiles. This method reduces excess transportation and ensures the hospital maintains sufficient supply of all items.

