



Residential Carpet Recycling

Why, How and Where to Recycle Carpet and Padding



Why Recycle Carpet? Consumers play a vital role in the recycling of carpet. According to the Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), only 7% of used carpet was recycled in 2011* and turned into new products or used as a fuel source with 93% of used carpet ending up in landfills.

In an effort to provide a green solution for used carpet, the Carpet Recycling Working Group was formed to advance carpet recycling in Illinois through infrastructure building, partner collaboration, program implementation, policy, and education and outreach efforts.

By recycling carpet, new products can be made from the material. Recycling carpet and padding decreases the need for virgin materials, reducing water and energy use as well as pollution emissions associated with many manufacturing processes.

Why Do I Have to Pay to Recycle? Residents can currently place large items like carpet at the curb for collection by their waste hauler or city. Unfortunately, this method only collects carpet for delivery to a landfill. Some areas do have a cost for this disposal service while others do not.

At this time, conscientious residents pay a small fee to divert their spent carpet and padding from the landfill. There are many costs associated with the recycling process which include transporting the material to a sorting facility, sorting the fibers by type with a special identification gun, transporting the material to a processing facility, and labor, fuel and facility costs involved in the processing of carpet fibers.

Carpet Recycling Facts

- Carpet is often made from petroleum-based plastic; nylon, polypropylene, and PET
- An estimated 560 million pounds of carpet is landfilled annually in Illinois,** a tremendous waste of a valuable non-renewable resource
- Carpet recycling yields immense greenhouse gas emission savings, second only to aluminum according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.***
- More specifically, carpet fibers can be made into products such as automobile parts, office furniture, decking, carpet, erosion control systems and consumer goods.

Carpet Tips and Reuse Ideas

- Request that your carpet installers recycle the carpet and padding after removal.
- Source carpet that is easily recyclable at end-of-life and ask if it can be returned to the point of purchase for recycling.
- If installing new carpet yourself, inquire about recycling options before removal as companies have varying material requirements for recycling.
- If carpet is in excellent condition, consider having it washed, resized and resealed for use elsewhere in the house.
- Old carpet can also be cut up for use in the bed of a truck, car trunk, basement, garage, tents or in pet carriers.

Sources:

*Carpet America Recovery Effort: carpetrecovery.org

**2009 Illinois Commodity/Waste Generation and Characterization Study: illinois.gov

***USEPA: epa.gov





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Where Can I Recycle Carpet? Permanent drop-off locations exist throughout the state.

Recycling Events are held periodically in counties and municipalities in Illinois. They may now receive carpet and padding for recycling. Please contact your local Recycling Authority for event schedules and details.

Curbside Programs are another method of recycling carpet, however currently the pilot program in Oak Park is the first of its kind in Illinois.

Retail Outlets frequently recycle carpet back-of-house. Ask your carpet retailer if they will recycle your old carpet when you buy your new carpet from them. If not, have them contact the CRWG for details on how they can!

By recycling old carpet and padding, these valuable resources can be made into new materials instead of creating products from virgin materials. If carpet and padding find their way to the landfill, the life cycle of those materials has ended. If carpet and padding are brought to a specified drop-off location for recycling, then those materials can be utilized in another form, lengthening their life by many times.

Items Accepted

- Clean and dry materials
- Residential Carpet
- Commercial Carpet (not glued down) accepted only with prior approval
- Carpet tile with prior approval ONLY
- Carpet pad made of polyurethane foam (the speckled kind)

Items Not Accepted

- No wet materials
- No duct tape
- No tack strips, nails, staples or knife blades
- No wet glue, debris, refuse, rocks or mud
- No construction debris (including no asbestos or sheetrock)
- No plastic film

Recycling Locations

Visit swanainninois.org/carpet for full details on these public carpet recycling locations.

- American Recycling Systems, Zion
- C&D Recycling, Northbrook
- Go Green Carpet Recycling/CLEAR, Northlake, IL and Hazelwood, MO
- JKS Ventures, Melrose Park
- K. Hoving, West Chicago
- MBL Recycling, Palatine
- Oak Park Curbside Collection Program
- PCI Flortech, Addison
- Republic Services, Chicago
- TAZ Recycling, McCook
- Veolia Landfill, Zion