

Connecticut Recycles Day - November 15

Event Planners Guide



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Connecticut Recycles Day, November 15, is a national recycling awareness day. The purpose of the day is to increase participation in local recycling programs and to raise awareness about the related issues of composting, reuse, waste reduction, buying products made from recycled materials and the positive impact of recycling on reducing global warming.

Connecticut Recycles Day is sponsored by the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition (CRC), a non-profit, 501(c)-3 organization affiliated with the National Recycling Coalition. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) supports CRC in its efforts by providing information and resources for event planners and participants. For more information, go to the CT DEP's [Connecticut Recycles Day](#), [America Recycles Day](#), and the [Connecticut Recyclers Coalition](#).

This guide has been prepared to help you with ideas for events at school, work or in your community. It will also answer some questions you may have about Connecticut Recycles Day.

Recycling and Global Warming

When we think about [global warming](#) we really have to look at the big picture. The earth's climate is getting warmer in part because of "greenhouse gases" created by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas. We rely on fossil fuels for our cars, factories, utilities and homes and for manufacturing and distributing products we use every day. But burning more and more of these fuels is releasing large quantities of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. By practicing the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), we use fewer natural resources, create less pollution and breathe healthier air. In fact, one of the recommendations in the recently published [Connecticut Climate Change Action Plan](#) is to increase recycling in the State to 40%, so the 3 R's are more important than ever.

Although the activities listed in the "Reduce Global Warming" section are not typical themes for events, you might creatively incorporate them into yours to get people thinking about that "big picture". For instance, at your event, you could distribute flyers for RideShare. Or in addition to providing information about recycling items in your town, you might also let them know about the [Energy Star](#) website. If students collect deposit cans for recycling, the money could be put towards purchasing a tree for the school.

WAYS TO CELEBRATE CONNECTICUT RECYCLES DAY

Listed below are ideas about how teachers, schools, businesses and individuals can participate in Connecticut Recycles Day as well as other opportunities to incorporate recycling into everyday life. It's fun and easy and will make for a healthier more sustainable environment.

REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE

❖ **Technotrash Collection**

Schools, Workplace, Civic Groups

Organize an event to collect VHS/CD/DVD/audio cassette/computers/empty ink jet and toner cartridges/cell phones/CDRW/jewel cases/pagers/PDAs. [GreenDisk](#) is one company that will recycle all of these items.

❖ **No Waste Meals**

Grade: Any, also Families, Workplace

The goal is to have no excess garbage or food waste. This can be measured within a school system by janitors who empty the trash as well as volunteers who "monitor" the ORT (waste) amount. If this is an ongoing project there can be a bulletin board with the daily/weekly/monthly "ORT report" (keeping track of the amount of waste), the grade/lunch table/individual with the least amount of waste can receive a prize. Encourage students to only take as much food as they can eat in one sitting, bring in reusable lunch bags and utensils, and food without excess packaging such as fruit or chips in reusable containers. To take it one step further, the food waste that is acquired could be used to start a compost pile for the school. Check the DEP website for more ideas on [cutting waste at your school](#).

❖ **Look into your [school's recycling program](#)!**

Grade: Any

What is being done to recycle at your school? Can you improve on anything and can you volunteer to help recycle? Look into it and get recycling!

❖ **Buckets from Bulk Products BONUS!**

Grade: Any

Encourage purchasing products in bulk, such as snack foods, dried fruit, condiments, sauces, etc. especially if the product comes in a bucket (any size will do). When the food item has run out, use the bucket as a planter by decorating it with latex paint and plant your favorite flower, herb, fruit or vegetable. You're not only recycling, but you can add color to an area and enjoy having your favorite plant around.

❖ **Game Time**

Grade: 5-8

Expose students to the environmental costs of over-consumption and materialism with a video, such as [Affluenza](#). Check your local library as well as the Internet for a copy. After discussing the issues, have students create a game out of recycled materials, like old cardboard from boxes, scrap paper, game pieces from other games that aren't played with (be creative). The object of the game should be to acquire the least amount of materialistic possessions by reducing, reusing and recycling, with possible "bonus points" for things like helping out in the community. The games should be easy enough for a young child to be played because when the students are finished with them, they could be donated to local day care centers and kindergarten classrooms for rainy day activities. That way you can pass the message along to younger kids.

❖ **“Floppies for Kiddies Organization”**

Grade: Any

Donate floppy disks to [Floppies for Kiddies](#), an organization that recycles and reformats floppies, then forwards them to schools, rehabilitation centers and senior centers in need (with older computers) across the U.S. It doesn't matter what type of floppy it is (Macintosh or IBM-compatible) they will take as many disks as you are willing to donate. Mail disks to: Floppies for Kiddies, 20349 Hwy. 36, Covington, LA 70433

❖ **Rejuvenate Old Clothing**

Grade: 3-8

[Tie-dye](#) old worn out clothing and towels that may be stained or damaged. Not only will the stain be camouflaged, but also the students will recycle their old belongings into something “bright and new” to wear. Also encourage students with younger siblings or cousins to bring in clothes they've outgrown and worn in to be rejuvenated and passed down.

❖ **Re-stuffable Pillows**

Grade: 5-8

Find any [pillow pattern](#), and old piece of fabric such as old clothing, curtains, sheets etc. that is big enough so that you can create pillows out of it. Instead of sewing the pillow all the way around, leave one of the ends open by attaching a zipper to it so that when the pillow begins to deflate you can add more stuffing to it. If it gets dirty you can remove the stuffing to wash it and re-stuff when clean! The pillow will never be flat! Tip: use old nylons as stuffing; just cut them up before hand into long strips and scrunch.

❖ **“Foster New Beginnings”**

Grade: Any

Contact your local foster family agency to see if they will accept used luggage as a gift to help kids move into new homes without transporting their belongings in paper or plastic bags. It will make their moving experience a lot more enjoyable and your old luggage will be used to help others instead of become garbage. The [Department of Children and Families](#) (DCF) will accept luggage in good condition. You can get more information about the facility on the website or you can drop off your luggage at the DCF Office located at 364 West Middle Turnpike in Manchester CT, the main entrance is in the back next door to “MARC” there is a little red roof and you can leave the luggage downstairs with a security guard.

❖ **Camera...Action**

Grade: Any

If your town has a local cable access channel, why not get the recycling message across by creating a news documentary or short play to inform the public of why recycling and conservation is so important. Be creative and come up with a script and costumes, show all of your friends that you were on TV and get them involved with recycling as well.

❖ **Hold a book swap or sale**

Grade: Any

This is easily coordinated with a reading program at schools. Children bring in books and receive a ticket for each donated book. They then can use the tickets to "shop" for "new" books. In a business setting, you can ask people to donate books and then hold a tag sale of books. The money earned could be donated to a charity chosen by your employees.

❖ **Collect reusable items for charity**

Grade: Any

Contact local charities before you start collecting to make certain that you have a home for collected items. In the fall, collect items like coats, mittens and hats may be useful to local social service agencies. Your local dog pound or animal shelter may be able to use old sheets, towels and blankets.

❖ **Visit one of [Connecticut's Trash Museums](#)**

Grade: Any

These museums provide tours free of charge to both youth and adult groups. They are located in Hartford, 211 Murphy Road (860) 247-4280 and in Stratford at 1410 Honeyspot Road (203) 386-9755.

❖ **Sponsor a contest**

Grade: Any

Have your students design recycling posters, bookmarks or sculptures from "found" materials. You could choose essays or poems about recycling or even a song or rap designed to promote recycling for students who don't draw. Invite parents in to see a display showcasing student talent.

❖ **Collect deposit cans and bottles**

Grade: Any

Collect deposit cans and use the money for a special school project or donate it to a worthy cause.

❖ **Host a recycling-related display**

Schools, Workplace, Municipalities, Civic Groups

Businesses may utilize the employee cafeteria or lobby. Local municipalities may want to take advantage of space in the local library, town hall or community center. [Displays may be borrowed from the DEP](#) or you may want to design your own to highlight the provisions and accomplishments of your own recycling program.

❖ **The Gift of Sight**

Schools, Workplace

Donate old eyeglasses to the Gift of Sight Program run by Lions Clubs throughout the U.S. and Canada in conjunction with Lens Crafters. You can also drop your glasses off at any Lens Crafters store, call your local Lions Club or call 800-74-SIGHT.

❖ **Host a "Green Meeting" or "Green Event"**

Workplace

Instead of using invitations, save paper and money and invite your guests via telephone or e-mail if very informal. If you have a choice where to hold the event, try to find a place that is centrally located or accessible by mass transit so your guests can carpool. Instead of having plastic and paper your next catered meeting, request silverware and china plates so that they can be washed and reused or just minimize the use of disposables. Incorporate other ways to reduce waste, like bite size sandwiches so no utensils are needed and providing pitchers so individual cans and bottles are not needed, but then don't forget to only take as much food as you can eat so you don't waste food products either. Lastly recycle! Make sure recycling receptacles are located next to trashcans and clearly labeled. Go to the DEP website for more information on [green event planning](#).

❖ **Encourage reuse in your employee cafeteria**

Good for the workplace

Have the cafeteria provide reduced priced coffee and other beverages for people who bring their own reusable mugs.

Cookies and Community Awareness

Good for Girl/Boy Scout Troops

We all know and love that time of year when Girl and Boy Scout troops go around selling those beloved cookies, but why not have an added bonus? After you've gotten your customer to buy a few boxes of yummy treats also hand out a fact sheet about recycling that you have prepared just to make them aware of issues and ways that they can reduce, reuse and recycle. This way you'll not only be selling cookies, but hopefully opening people's eyes to ways that they can recycle. (In the Hartford area cookie selling begins officially on November 1, 2004.)

❖ **Donate your old computer to someone who can use it** **Great for anyone**

The [National Cristina Foundation](#) is a non-profit organization located in Greenwich, CT that accepts donations of used computers. The way this works is that you enter your information about where you are located and the computer equipment you would like to donate on the NCF website. They then take your information and pair it up with a local charity or school in need in your community and then the exchange takes place from there!

❖ **Participate in an [“I Buy Different” Campaign](#) or start a group** **Great for Young Adults**

Learn about some kids who are really making a difference by “being different” and practicing environmentally friendly ways to live.

COMPOSTING

❖ **Start [composting](#) at your school or business or host a composting workshop**

Start composting all lunchtime food scraps. CT DEP also has [videos](#) and a [brochure](#) that can be used as part of an educational workshop and a [manual](#) for starting a compost program in schools.

CONSERVING WATER

◆ **Hang on! That water is still good!**

Great for everyone

The water that drains off of buildings during rain storms can be a very good source of usable water, place a [rain barrel](#) underneath the spout of a rain gutter so that the next time it rains you can collect the rain water and use it to water plants or wash your pet with, same goes for leftover water after draining pasta. Recycle and use that water for washing your dishes when you are done eating, or water small houseplants, that way you won't be wasting.

REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING

❖ **Plant plants!**

Grade: Any

[Plant a couple of additional trees](#) around your home or school or church or wherever there is room because trees reduce the amount of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) by 20 pounds per year.

❖ **Walk, bike, bus or hike!**

Great for every one

Leave your car home for two days a week, ride a bike to work or to the store, walk to church or carpool where you need to go. The carbon dioxide reduction from just leaving the car off for two days a week is an astonishing 1,590 lbs per year! For more information about carpooling, contact [Rideshare](#). For more information on biking to work, contact the [Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance](#).

❖ **Purchase Energy Star products if you need new appliances**

If you replace your home's refrigerator with high efficiency model you reduce 320 lbs per year of carbon dioxide from reaching earth's atmosphere. If you replace your current washing machine with a low-energy, low-water-use machine the carbon dioxide reduction is 440 lbs per year. Go to the [Energy Star](#) website for a wealth of information.

Looking to buy a new car?

You can greatly reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 5,600 lbs per year when you purchase a [fuel-efficient car](#) to replace your most frequently used automobile!

❖ **Start an [Anti-Idling Campaign](#)**

Great for any one who drives

Instead of letting those cars run while waiting in line at the drive through or waiting to pick up a friend or family member turn off your cars and stop wasting gas and emitting harmful toxins into the atmosphere.

The listing or any organization in the above activities is there for informational purposes only and is not a complete list or an endorsement by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

Visit the CT DEP [Recycling](#) and [Pollution Prevention](#) Home pages for more ideas!

CONNECTICUT RECYCLES DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who should celebrate? Everyone! In Connecticut, recycling is the law, so everyone should be recycling at home, at school, at work and away from home. Events to promote recycling are held annually at schools, businesses, municipal offices, state agencies and non-profits every year.

We already celebrate Earth Day, why should we do Recycles Day too? Many schools and even some businesses celebrate both days. Earth Day (April 22) and America Recycles Day (November 15) are about 6 months apart so that they reinforce each other. It is especially effective for schools to use Connecticut Recycles Day as an opportunity get new students to participate in their school's recycling program early in the year. On Earth Day there are many other environmental issues that may take center stage and not leave a lot of time to focus on recycling.

My town has had a recycling program for a dozen years and I recycle, why the continued emphasis? Although recycling may seem routine for many people, as the composition of our waste stream changes, so must what our recycling programs collect. Electronics is probably the best example of this. As recently as ten years ago, collections for used electronics were unheard of. Today, many municipalities are sponsoring collection programs for used computers, TVs and cell phones that not only add weight and volume to the waste stream but also contain many toxic components like lead. Also, people need to be reminded how to prepare materials for recycling properly.

How can I get involved even if I don't host an event?

- Contact your local Department of Public Works to make certain that you are recycling everything that you can.
- When you contact your town, ask about any special collections for electronics or household hazardous waste.
- Start [composting!](#)
- Make certain that your place of work or school is in compliance with the State's recycling law.
- When you are away from home, (e.g. at the mall food court) make certain that you recycle the same items that you recycle at home.