

SCRAP TIRES



Each year in Georgia, we generate millions of used tires as waste or scrap. Scrap tires are found stockpiled at landfills, stacked in scrap yards, and abandoned in communities. Scrap tires can be recycled, reducing potential environmental and health hazards, and reused for many beneficial purposes.

HEALTH HAZARDS

Tire stockpiles create blight but, more importantly, they are also an environmental, public safety, and health threat.

Scrap tires have oily chemicals that are flammable and tire fires create injury hazards. Burning tires also release hazardous chemicals, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, and toxic metals, into air, water, and soil. Tire fires are difficult to extinguish, and are expensive to clean up.

Because of their shape, scrap tires can also collect water and debris, which creates a breeding and feeding habitat for insects and rodents carrying diseases such as West Nile Virus. Scrap tires are also a source of dirt, dust, moisture, and mold.

RECYCLED TIRE MATERIAL

In the early 1990's, Georgia created the Scrap Tire Program in an effort to clean up and recycle the nearly 12 million tires housed in illegal stockpiles throughout the state. Funding for cleanup is derived from scrap tire management fees charged on the retail sale of new tires.

Today, the majority of scrap tires generated are shipped to recycling facilities where they are shredded into chips, which are primarily used for energy-related and civil engineering applications such as asphalt, rubber mulch, playground surfaces, fuel hoses, and other products.



Recycling scrap tires is environmentally responsible and promotes public health by reducing or eliminating:

- the number of tires entering the solid waste stream
- the need for clean fill dirt and other scarce natural resources
- costs to communities by using easily appropriated, inexpensive materials
- injuries by providing a shock absorbing surface

BENEFITS OF RECYCLING TIRES

Shredded rubber tire surfaces withstand the elements longer than conventional wood mulches, lasting at least 10 years without replacement. It provides a safe surface for people to walk on and children to play on, with one of the highest safety ratings of any ground covering.

There are also many health benefits to using recycled scrap tire material. These surfaces can:

- ❖ reduce impact and injury from falls
- ❖ provide shock absorbent surface that reduce muscle and joint strain
- ❖ create low maintenance walking, jogging, or biking paths and playground areas
- ❖ reduce moisture, mold, and dust common with wood chips, rocks, and dirt surfaces

Tires can be collected, shredded and colored locally, promoting a sense of community ownership and pride for a community project. A well-maintained walking path makes exercise more pleasant, and can further entice people to be physically active.

In addition, using various colors of nontoxic rubber chip mulch helps make great looking flower gardens and landscapes, and using light colors can reduce the potential for heat stress.



Photo courtesy of Scrappy Green Recycles

IS IT SAFE TO USE RECYCLED TIRES?

Yes. Studies of the health impacts of using recycled tire rubber for recreation areas and children's playgrounds have been conducted by health departments in many states. These studies tested the effects of crumb rubber materials on heat stress, potential for injury, latex allergy, chemical exposure, and infection.

The studies conclude that heat stress may be a concern when using crumb rubber material; however, crumb rubber material is otherwise safe and reduces the potential for injury. It is not considered to be a concern for chemical exposure or latex allergies.

WHERE CAN I RECYCLE MY TIRES?

Scrap tires can be recycled at recycling drop-off centers, participating tire stores, and through various government agencies and non-profit organization events. Businesses can coordinate recycling through the Georgia Scrap Tire Program by calling (404) 656-7802.

Some local governments in Georgia offer scrap tire round-up collection events in which used tires are collected and recycled for a minimal fee. Residents can check their local newspaper for event listings, or search for tire recycling locations at www.earth911.org.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Georgia Division of Public Health
Environmental Health Branch
Chemical Hazards Program
(404) 657-6534**

www.health.state.ga.us/programs/hazards

**Georgia Environmental Protection
Division
Scrap Tire Program
(404) 656-7802**

www.gaepd.org

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Recycled Tire Program**

[www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/muncpl/
tires/basic.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/muncpl/tires/basic.htm)

**Scrappy Green Recycles
(678) 444-4911**

www.scrappygreen.org

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RECYCLING AND REUSING SCRAP TIRES



CHEMICAL HAZARDS PROGRAM

Environmental Health Branch



**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH**
Division of Public Health