



National Recycling Coalition
1325 G Street NW
Suite 1025
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (202) 347-0450
Fax: (202) 347-0449
www.nrc-recycle.org

This guide is part of NRC's Media Advocacy Toolkit for Recycling.

Also See:

"How to Respond to Attacks on Recycling in the Media"

The "Recycling in the Media" Bulletin Board in the Members-Only Section of NRC's website at www.nrc-recycle.org.

The National Recycling Coalition is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and improvement of recycling, and also source reduction, composting and reuse, by providing technical information, education, training, outreach and advocacy services to its members in order to conserve resources and benefit the environment.

20 Press Release Ideas to Promote Recycling

Generating positive media exposure for recycling is a great way to reinforce support for your local recycling program and to remind residents that their efforts do make a difference.

You can encourage the media to cover recycling favorably by issuing press releases on suggested stories. In fact, it's a great idea to get in the habit of sending press releases to the media on a regular basis, such as monthly or quarterly. Using the 20 ideas in this guide, you should have no problem filling out a press release calendar for the year.

Remember to consider the complete recycling loop when developing story ideas. Think about collection, processing, manufacturing with recycled materials, and buying recycled products.

NRC's companion guide, "How to Respond to Attacks on Recycling in the Media" contains lots of talking points and statistics that you can use in your press releases.

Press Release Ideas

Here are 20 ideas for press releases on recycling, in no particular order.

#1: Environmental Results. Use NRC's Environmental Benefits Calculator to add up the energy and natural resource savings associated with your recycling program over a set amount of time (i.e., the last quarter or year).

#2: Energy Savings. U.S. energy policy is a hot issue and stories about sky-high fuel prices and rocketing heating bills provide a great opportunity for you to explain how recycling saves energy and is an important part of the overall solution.

#3: Recycling Trends. Explain how your recycling program has changed over time. Are you recycling more or less of certain materials? Why do you think that is?

#4: Profile a Recycling Business Owner. Talk about the economic benefits of recycling in your community by profiling a recycling business owner. How many people are employed? What other benefits come from the company's work in your area?

#5: Profile a Store with Recycled Products. Does a store in your area supply an unusual amount or type of recycled products?

#6: Use Specially Designated Days to Highlight Recycling Opportunities. The second Monday in January is National Clean Off Your Desk Day, so why not highlight the importance of office paper recycling? Administrative Professionals Day (formerly Secretary's Day) in the last week of April is a good opportunity to highlight some of the recycled office products available in your community. And don't forget the most special day of all: America Recycles Day on November 15th! A promotional items company called AdSources has a great list of "special" days and months on its website at www.adsources.com. Click on "Ideas."

#7: Seasonal Tips. Each season brings its own set of waste reduction issues, from yard trimmings in the spring to wrapping paper and Christmas trees in the winter. Offer your residents some tips on reducing waste and recycling more during each season. The U.S. EPA has tips organized by month at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/specials/funfacts/index.htm>



The National Recycling Coalition

#8: Recycling Milestones. Has your program reached a particular goal (e.g., number of households participating) or milestone (e.g., certain number of tons recycled?). Review what it took to get to that milestone.

#9: Recycling Anniversaries. Celebrate an important anniversary in your program. How long has your program been in existence? How long have you been recycling various materials?

#10: Focus on a Material. Is one material in your collection program a shining star? Highlight that material, how much is recycled locally, and the benefits of recycling it.

#11: Highlight the “Forgotten” Materials. Do you collect a material that residents often forget about, like aerosol cans or magazines? Remind residents about any unusual materials they can recycle in your community.

#12: Money Saved by Recycling. Show how families or businesses in your community are saving money by recycling.

#13: Plans for the New Year. At the beginning of the calendar year or your budget year, unveil the plans you have for your program in the coming twelve months. Can residents and businesses expect anything new from your office?

#14: Top Ten Lists. Everyone loves lists. Issue a press release with the top ten reasons to recycle or the top ten ways to save money by reducing waste in your community.

#15: Job Creation. When layoffs are in the news, highlight the ways that recycling creates U.S. jobs. Use the data from NRC’s Recycling Economic Information Study.

#16: Where Do the Materials Go? Residents are always curious about what actually happens to their recyclables when they leave the curb. Trace the recycling trail from your community to processors and manufacturers.

#17: Manufacturing with Recycled Materials. What manufacturers in your area are using recycled content? Explain the role of recycled materials in their manufacturing process, where they get the materials, etc.

#18: E-Waste Tips. Everyone needs advice on what to do with old cell phones, computers, TVs and everything else electronic. Help residents figure it out by explaining their options.

#19: Recycled Content in Cars. Major automobile manufacturers are including recycled content in their cars and trucks. Go to your local dealership and highlight the recycled content on the lot.

#20: Construction Site Recycling. Are local housing developers or commercial construction companies implementing on-site recycling programs or using recycled building materials?

Formatting Your Press Release

Reporters expect material to be presented in a certain way, so it’s best to follow the standard format. Below is a suggested template that you could use with any of the ideas in this guide.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Your Name and Title
Your Organization

Office: Your Phone Number

Mobile: Your Phone Number

Your Email Address

Title of the Press Release

Subtitle of the Press Release

CITY, STATE (Month, Day, Year) — Start your lead paragraph with the most important and interesting information and a “hook” that will grab a reporter or editor’s attention.

Follow with two-three short paragraphs that elaborate on the main points with additional details. Include at least two direct quotes.

Close with a paragraphs that offers more information: For additional information, please (insert website or other contact info).

Your last paragraph should include an underlined heading and boilerplate text about your organization like this:

About XYZ Organization

Include a paragraph of background info on your organization, such as its mission statement, when it was founded, etc.

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*(### signals the end of the release.
Some people use -30- instead.)*

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