



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (RRR) Patch Program

for groups, troops, and classes

Thurston County Solid Waste offers the RRR Patch Program. The program is designed to teach youth the meaning and potential actions behind the phrase reduce, reuse, and recycle.

The patch program encourages scouts and other youth to take action to take better care of their environment and neighborhood.



Patch requirements

For 2nd--6th graders:

- Complete one Activity from each section of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.
- Complete one Action Project as a group or with your family.

For 7th graders and older:

- Complete one Activity from each section of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.
- Complete two Action Projects as a group or with your family.

After the patch requirements are met:

- Record the activities and comments on the RRR Patch requirement sheet on page 9.
- Mail or email the completed sheet to:

Colleen Minion
9605 Tilley Rd S
Olympia, WA 98512
Minionc@co.thurston.wa.us



Your group must be based in Thurston County to earn the patch.

Activity section

Choose at least one Activity from each of the three R's.

Section 1: Reduce

Reducing waste means not to make trash in the first place. Everything that goes into your garbage can is buried in a landfill and never used again.

The best way to reduce waste is to avoid buying and using disposable items like straws and single-serving containers. Buying and using less stuff will save you money and send less trash to landfills.

Activity 1: Pack a waste-free lunch

Learn how to make less trash when packing a lunch or snack.

1. Copy the Waste-free lunch planning sheet as a handout (**Appendix A** on page 11).
2. Discuss how to pack a waste-free lunch for school, and have your group make a list of waste-free snacks for meetings.
3. Have everyone draw posters about ways to reduce waste. Share the posters with each other, another troop, or display them for others to learn about reducing waste.

Waste-free lunch ideas

- Carry your lunch in a lunch box, insulated lunch bag, or cloth lunch bag.
- Pack a sandwich, chips, yogurt, or pie in a reusable food container.
- Bring snacks in natural wrap packages, such as an apple, banana, or hard-boiled egg.
- Put drinks in a reusable thermos or water bottle.
- Include durable utensils and a cloth napkin, which can be washed and reused.
- Find out more at www.wastefreelunches.org



Activity 2: Host a waste-free party

The group will learn how to organize a party where everything is reused, recycled, or composted.

1. Create a list of what would be needed for the party such as invitations, decorations, favors, food, and what would be needed to clean up.
2. Using the template provided in **Appendix B** on page 12, fit as many of these items under the reusable, compostable, and recyclable columns as possible. *Remember, this list can be only items that will not be put in a trash bag. Only items that are reusable, compostable, or recyclable can be used at the party.*
3. Put your new skills to use by planning your next meeting so that it is waste-free.
4. Have each group member take the list home to share with family for holiday and party planning.

Helpful hint!

Recycling is great, but reducing and reusing are where it's at! Try to have as many items as possible in the Reusable category.

Activity 3: Research the life cycle of a product's packaging

The group will learn how many resources it takes to make, ship, and dispose of an item.

1. Choose a product with a lot of packaging.
2. Make a list of the raw materials used to make the product and its packaging.
Example: plastic is made from oil.
3. Decide what will happen to the product and its packaging when it no longer can be used. Will it be recycled? Composted? Put in the landfill?
4. Design new packaging for the product. The new packaging should:
 - a. Weigh less.
 - b. Take up less space.
 - c. Be made from recyclable or compostable materials
5. See if you can find a similar product on the market that would have less impact on the earth.

Section 2: Reuse

Using something again is called reuse. Instead of throwing something away, you can repair it, lend it to a friend, donate it to charity, or make it into something different. All of these extend the life of an item and end up creating less trash.

It's also important to think about reuse before you buy a new item. Before you buy something, ask yourself these questions:

- “Do I really need a new one, or is a used one just as good?” A lot of used items are just as good as new, and a lot cheaper! Also, don't forget to donate unwanted items when you are done with them.
- “Can I repair or reuse this item, or will I have to keep buying new ones?” Choosing reusable or repairable items doesn't just keep trash out of the landfill, it will save you money over time!

Activity 1: Tool time

Learn or experience how to repair an item.



- 1.** Brainstorm ways to maintain goods that youth value and discuss the benefits of proper care and repair of goods. For example:
 - a. Basic bicycle maintenance and proper storage.
 - b. How to protect and store games and toys.
- 2.** Have the group come up with what they would like to learn to maintain or repair.
- 3.** Bring in a guest speaker or take a field trip to learn how to use tools safely and learn how to repair something. Some ideas are:
 - a. Bike repair shop.
 - b. Wood shop.
 - c. Garage.

Activity 2: Sew it up

Learn to mend torn clothing, attach missing buttons, or hem pants or a skirt.

1. Discuss ways to maintain clothing to keep them looking new, so the purchases will last longer.
2. Share ideas about how mending can prevent items from becoming trash.
3. Have each group member bring in an item that needs mending, and do one of the following.
 - a. Invite someone in to teach everyone how to mend clothes by hand.
 - b. Take a sewing class to learn how to mend clothes on a sewing machine. (re)fabulous, a local Thurston County business, offers classes that teach youth how to sew using reclaimed fabric and how to mend clothes. Visit their website at www.refabulouslyou.com.



Activity 3: Reuse your rubbish

Youth will make a craft project using materials that would have been thrown in the trash or recycling.

1. Use the internet to find reuse craft projects by searching for trash or recycled craft projects, or visit one of these cool websites:
 - a. www.craftbits.com/recycled-crafts
 - b. www.kinderart.com/recycle
 - c. www.recycledcrafts.craftgossip.com
2. Have the group and their families collect the items needed.
3. Do the craft.
4. Share five ways each person's family reuses goods at home.

Helpful hint!

Look at what you and your family throw away each day. Do you see any items you could find a new use for or make something out of? Some ideas are:

- Make a reusable tote bag out of chip bags.
- Collect glass jars and turn them into miniature green houses.
- Use a cereal box and scrap paper to make a journal.

Section 3: Recycle

Recycling is collecting and taking items to a factory to be made into something new. This uses resources from old items instead of using brand new ones.

The aluminum cans in your recycle bin are melted down in a factory and made into new cans. Other aluminum items can be recycled into parts for bikes, cars, or even airplanes!

Activity 1: Build a worm bin

Having a worm bin at home is a great way to deal with your food scraps. And by letting worms eat your food waste, you'll end up with one of the best soil amendments available—worm castings.

1. Research worm bins.
2. Find out what worms like to eat and create a feeding plan.
3. Build the worm bin. See **Appendix C** on page 12 for instructions.



Activity 2: Volunteer to staff a waste station

Thurston County Solid Waste has recycling stations set up at many community events. You can volunteer for a three hour shift to help the public put their recycling and compost in the right bin. To learn more or sign up for a volunteer shift do one of the following:

1. Visit our website at www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/master/master-home.htm.
2. Call Colleen Minion at (360) 867-2280 or minionc@co.thurston.wa.us.

Activity 3: Recycling, learn and share

1. Learn what items you can and can't recycle or compost in Thurston County by doing one of the following:
 - a. Have Thurston County Solid Waste give a recycling presentation to your group. Contact Colleen Minion at (360) 867-2280 or minionc@co.thurston.wa.us.
 - b. Use the internet:
 - i. To learn what items go into your recycle bin, visit: www.co.thurston.wa.us/solidwaste/recycling/recycling-prepare-choices.htm.
 - ii. To learn what items go into your compost collection cart, visit: www.silverspringsorganics.com/products.html.
2. Make a poster to take home that will help you remember what items go where.
3. Share what you've learned with your family at home.
4. Monitor the recycling and composting in your home for one week to make sure that everyone is doing it correctly.



Action Projects

Action Projects can be completed as a group or family.

2nd–6th graders – Complete one Action Project.

7th graders and older – Complete two Action Projects.

- 1. Recycling** – Start a cell phone or print cartridge collection program at school, a church, or a local business.
- 2. Donation** – Organize a collection and give games, toys, clothing, or other items to Goodwill, a church, or another charity.
- 3. Swap day** – Organize a clothing, book, toy, or game exchange.
- 4. Teach “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”** – Be a mentor to younger groups. Organize, promote, and teach the activities in this patch to other youth. This will help the younger kids get their RRR patch, too!
- 5. Composting** – Start or improve a compost collection program in your school lunchroom.
- 6. Plastic bags** – Host a showing of the documentary, *Bag It*. This is a great way to learn more about the complex issues associated with the manufacture, use, and disposal of plastic bags. Thurston County residents use between 90 and 125 million plastic shopping bags each year. To borrow a copy of the *Bag It* DVD, contact Loni Hanka at (360) 867-2282 or hankal@co.thurston.wa.us.
- 7. Repair project** – Help with a repair project such as repairing or painting a structure like a cabin, bridge, or bench.
- 8. Litter pick-up** – Clean up a park or local neighborhood by working together to pick up litter. Solid Waste can help by providing safety vests and litter grabbers for your group.
- 9. Catalog challenge** – Set a goal to reduce the amount of catalogs being sent out to families. Sixty catalogs canceled saves one tree. Visit www.CatalogCancelingChallenge.com for ideas to set your plan into motion.
- 10. Take the Waste Less Food Challenge** – Learn why it is so important to reduce the food we waste and help your families make changes at home. Visit www.WasteLessFood.com to take the challenge!

This patch program is adapted from Cuyahoga County’s patch program, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

RRR Patch requirement sheet

Contact information

Troop or group leader name _____

Mailing address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Troop number _____ Grades _____ Number in group _____

Please send _____ patches to contact information above.

Questions

1. Which REDUCE Activity did your group choose? Add any comments about teaching the activity or comments from the group.
2. Which REUSE Activity did your group choose? Add any comments about teaching the activity or comments from the group.
3. Which RECYCLE Activity did your group choose? Add any comments about teaching the activity or comments from the group.
4. What ACTION PROJECT(s) did your group do? Please add any comments.
5. What was the group's favorite part of this patch program?
6. Has the group or any of its members changed habits to produce less trash? How?

Remember—your group must be based in Thurston County to be eligible to earn the patch.

Mail or email this sheet to Colleen Minion: Minionc@co.thurston.wa.us

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