

THE

REDUCE

Reuse

Recycle

GUIDE

A guide
to help you
reduce trash,
reuse durable
items, and
recycle
everything
you can



A special publication of
The Berkshire Eagle
Saturday, November 18, 2023
Information valid through
November 2024



**FULL SERVICE WEEKLY TRASH
AND BI-WEEKLY RECYCLING**

Locally Owned and Operated

\$30
PER MONTH
No Hidden Fees

**On Trash Tote,
Weekly Pick Up**

\$38
PER MONTH
No Hidden Fees

**On Trash Tote,
Weekly Pick Up &
One Recycle Tote
Bi-Weekly Pick Up**

*Some towns recycling is mandatory.

ORDER ONLINE
PioneerValleyWaste.com

OR CALL
LENOX DALE OFFICE
413-551-7911 • 413-568-4443
TOLL FREE 1-866-883-4328

Welcome to the 2023

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Guide

Dear Berkshire County Residents and Business Owners,

The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility Advisory Board is pleased to present this Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Guide to you. It is full of useful information. I encourage you to put a copy in a safe place so you can refer to it all year long. We've made a special effort to ensure that the information provided within is applicable for all Berkshire communities (not just those that process their recyclable material at our Springfield facility).

We've chosen to publish the Guide in mid-November to honor America Recycles Day (November 14). The day deserves some special attention because misinformation about recycling has been circulating in the media over the last 18 months. When a major plastic pollution study reported that "Only 5 percent of plastic is recycled" they were referring to the percentage of ALL the plastic ever produced, which includes millions of plastic objects never intended to be recycled such as disposable plas-

tic utensils, plastic in automobile manufacturing, plastic used in hospital surgery rooms, and plastic toys. The truth is that the plastic bottles, jars, jugs, tubs, and clamshells that you put into your household recycling bin enjoy a significantly higher recycling rate. To illustrate, of the material delivered to the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility by its 65 member communities, a whopping 95% is sold to manufacturers or reused in some other fashion—a statistic we all can be proud of!

Of course, recycling is not the only way to conserve resources and limit our impact on the earth. We can't ignore the other critical pieces of the RRR pie: reduce and reuse. They are especially important because the Commonwealth's ability to accommodate the trash we produce has been reduced with the closure of Massachusetts landfills and waste incineration facilities (including the one in Pittsfield). This means that more and more

of our trash needs to be shipped out of state, at increased cost to each of us by your municipality or waste collection company. The smartest thing we can do to keep costs in check is to reduce the amount of trash we generate, and make sure that all the discarded material with reuse or recycling value is removed from our trash and put to a higher (and more sustainable) use.

We are delighted to partner with the Berkshire Eagle to present this Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Guide, and send special thanks to the Berkshire County business owners that help make production of this useful resource possible through their advertising support.

Sincerely,

Arlene C. Miller

Arlene C. Miller
Chair, MRF Advisory Board



WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL RECYCLING PROGRAM



Bottles, jugs, tubs, and cans that residents put in recycling programs ARE recycled...even the ones with novelty labels such as these! Pictured above are Springfield Materials Recycling Facility Advisory Board (SMAB) members and other Berkshire Leaders who were key contributors to this publication: Peter Hofman of Lee Greener Gateway Committee, Susan Waite of MassDEP, Mary Stucklen of Tommy's Compost, Linda Cernik of Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District, and Stephanie Blumenthal of Sheffield Saves. Not shown: Rene Wood of the Town of Sheffield.

What's Inside	
Welcome to the First Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Guide for Berkshire County.....	4
What Do I Do With...?.....	10
Kids Activity Page	21
Community Recycling Information	22

Acknowledgments

This guide is the first collaboration between The Berkshire Eagle and the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Advisory Board, with support from local leaders and advertisers. The Guide is produced in celebration of America Recycles Day on November 15. A browsable online version is available for the next 12 months via **The Berkshire Eagle** and at springfieldmrf.org.

These Springfield MRF Advisory Board members provided and reviewed content:

Linda Cernik

(Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative Representative, North Berkshire Solid Waste Management District)

Mary Stucklen

(Berkshire County Representative, Owner of Tommy's Compost Service)

Susan Waite

(MassDEP Municipal Assistance Coordinator, Western Region)

Rene Wood

(Town of Sheffield Recycling Coordinator, Berkshire County Representative)

The following Berkshire County waste reduction leaders were also important contributors:

Peter Hofman

(Chair of the Lee Greener Gateway Committee)

Stephanie Blumenthal

(Sheffield Saves)

RecycleSmartMA.gov, a project of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, also contributed valuable content to this publication.

We are grateful to the following MRF Advisory Board members who provided content development assistance:

Jan Ameen

(Franklin County Solid Waste Management District)

Tracy DeMaio

(Hampden County Representative, Town of Agawam)

Amy Donovan

(Franklin County Solid Waste Management District)

Abbey Massaro

(Hampden County Representative, Center for EcoTechnology)

Arlene Miller

(Hampden County Representative, Town of Longmeadow)

A special thank you to the Berkshire Eagle Advertising Team.

Please support our advertisers and tell them you saw their ad in the Berkshire Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Guide!

It's Not Waste Until It's Wasted: Learning to Make Better Disposal Choices

Nobody wants a landfill or waste incinerator in their neighborhood, but one of the emerging concerns over the last fifteen years is that Massachusetts' waste disposal options are drying up. Fewer local disposal options translate to higher transportation and disposal costs, which we all want to avoid. One of the easiest ways to avoid future high disposal fees is to reduce the quantity of waste that we generate. Some strategies to accomplish this are pretty simple. For instance, multiple waste

studies commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection reveal that we are discarding surprising amounts of valuable material. If we get better at sorting things like clothing, food waste, metal, paper, plastic and containers from our trash, we can eliminate a significant amount of incinerator and landfill-bound material.

In this inaugural issue, we will focus on steps each community member can take to reduce their waste. We'll provide simple overviews of ef-

fective strategies and offer for each key findings, tips, and in some cases, information about future changes to expect.

Look for the colored waste reduction strategy topic boxes on the following pages to find out more about local reduction initiatives.



Textile Recovery: A New Challenge Unfolds	PAGE 5
Waste Prevention: Stopping Waste Before it Starts	PAGE 6
Reuse is a Powerful Reduction Strategy	PAGE 7
New Developments in the Recycling World	PAGE 8
What We Know About Compost	PAGE 9



Happy Holidays

From the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District's
Board of Directors & Director, Linda Cernik

Residents of District Member-Towns are invited to participate
in our Holiday Light Recycling Program!

We've arranged for discarded holiday light strings to be recycled through your transfer station's scrap metal program.

www.nbswmd.com | 413-743-8208

Textile Recovery: A New Challenge Unfolds

1 Clothing and textile products amount to 6% of all material going into U.S. landfills and incinerators...that's 230,000 tons annually in Massachusetts alone.

2 Textile reuse and recycling have the second highest potential environmental impact on reducing greenhouse gases compared to other recyclables.

3 95% of all used clothing, footwear, and other household textile products can be reused or recycled, yet only 15% of reusable textiles are currently recovered from the waste stream.

4 Because of the high volume of valuable textiles in the trash, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) initiated a waste ban on textile disposal, effective November 1, 2022 (for details, visit mass.gov and search for "textile"). This means that residents need to bag up their unwanted clothing, towels, and sheets and bring them to a textile drop-off site.

5 Textiles are defined in the waste ban as "clothing, footwear, bedding, towels, curtains, fabric, and similar products, except for textiles contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects,

oil, or hazardous substances."

6 To retain their reuse value and avoid mildew contamination, all textile donations must be clean and dry. Even textiles that are worn, torn, and stained have value (really!).

7 About 45% of donated textiles are reused and sold as secondhand apparel, either in the U.S. or abroad, another 30% is converted into industrial wiping cloths, and 20% is remanufactured into products like carpet padding, insulation, or sound-proofing material. The final 5% is thrown away because it is wet/mildewed, or otherwise unsuitable for reuse.

8 Many municipal transfer stations host textile drop boxes. If you need help finding a textile donation location, call your community representative (see the Community Recycling Info page in this guide) or visit MassDEP's Beyond the Bin directory (recyclesearch.com/profile/ma). [Recyclingworksma.com](http://recyclingworksma.com) offers a Find-a-Recycler tool to help Massachusetts businesses locate textile recyclers (recyclingworksma.com).

9 The next time you are considering the purchase of a new item of clothing, consider visiting local or online second-hand clothing stores first.

Do This!



Not That!



Massachusetts residents throw away 230,000 tons of clothing, shoes, and other textiles annually, when over 90% of the material can instead be reused or recycled. All textiles, even those that are worn, torn, or stained can be recycled. Just make sure they are clean and dry.



Photos: Susan Waite

Sometimes clothing and textiles can be used in their original form and sometimes they can't. Secondhand and vintage clothing sales are the highest form of textile reclamation because the items require no processing in order to be useful or valued. The next level of reclamation is repurposing. Both levels save similar amounts of energy, water, raw materials, and pollution when compared to the manufacture of a new, similar item. Actual recycling of textiles (the third level of reclamation) would entail shredding the leather from these vintage cowboy boots and turning it into a completely new product. Because of the additional processing required in recycling, resource savings are less significant.

The Case for Waste Prevention

With a little bit of human will and creativity, we can bypass the creation of waste in the first place. Analyzing the sources of waste is a smart way to address waste proliferation. If a bathtub is overflowing, you need to turn off the tap, not just run for a mop. Eliminating waste before it is produced conserves energy and other resources that would have been consumed in the production and management of the waste.

Waste is a design flaw

Waste is a concept unique to humans. In nature, everything breaks down to be reused again; sooner or later everything created by nature, returns to nature. How can we harness human ingenuity to design modern products that mimic this natural cycle...or something close to it? A banana is a great model for food packaging of the future. It arrives in an easily removed, protective, and compostable sleeve. To incentivize industry leaders toward

creative, waste-reducing solutions, governments all over the world are enacting Expanded Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation, which requires manufacturers to take responsibility for the environmental impact of their products. Manufacturers have the ability to design and modify their products to make them (and/or their packaging) more environmentally friendly. EPR has proven to be successful in other countries, as well as the U.S. Recently the State of Maine passed ground-breaking EPR legislation for product packaging. To learn about local EPR efforts, visit the Massachusetts Product Stewardship Council (tinyurl.com/MassProdSC).

Preventing wasted food

An alarming 40% of food produced in the U.S. goes uneaten, and uneaten food wastes an extraordinary amount of resources—even if it is composted. Each time something in our cupboard or refrigerator becomes

inedible, the resources used to grow, harvest, transport, manufacture, and package that food are squandered... seeds, water, fertilizer, labor, and energy. When you do the math, it is easy to understand Project Drawdown's (Drawdown.org) claim that the food we grow but don't eat produces 8% of the total greenhouse gases caused by human activity. Improving our food purchasing, storage, cooking, and donation will make a significant impact on reducing climate-changing gases emitted from wasted food. Visit Savethefood.com to learn more. Businesses and institutions can focus on similar things to reduce their food waste footprint. They can also join local food rescue efforts, such as those conducted by Berkshire Bounty, to ensure that discarded-yet-perfectly-edible food is quickly redistributed. Visit Recyclingworksma.com to learn more.

Shifting from single-use to reuse

Reducing waste at the source is

a powerful concept, and the U.S. food service industry might be a good place to start. By migrating back toward reuse in food service, we can eliminate the use of millions of single-use disposable items. The City of Berkeley, California recently passed an ordinance to limit the use of disposable food ware, and other communities are following suit. Learn more about the impact of reuse in **Upstream Solution's** new report, *Reuse Wins: The Environmental, Economic, and Business Case for Switching from Single Use to Reuse in the Food Service*. Of course, governmental mandates are not required for personal habit changes. Making an effort to bring your own reusable coffee mug on your daily coffee run, or pre-emptively telling your favorite take-out restaurant that you don't need plastic utensils, will go a long way toward modeling positive waste reduction behaviors to others and reducing our personal single-use disposable impact.

Do This!



Not That!



120 billion single-use coffee cups are used and thrown away annually the United States. Most are not recyclable or compostable because they are made of materials like plastic-coated paper or foam. Bringing your own reusable coffee cup to your daily coffee shop conserves resources and prevents waste.



PHOTO/BerkshireBounty

Wasted food has a surprisingly large footprint in terms of climate-changing gas. Food rescue organizations, like Berkshire Bounty, reduce waste by collecting and transporting donated surplus prepared food from donor sites to food pantries and other organizations for distribution. Donors can include supermarkets, college dining halls, caterers, bakeries, hospitals, and convenience stores.

The Greenest Product is the One You Already Own

Like waste reduction, 'reuse' is all about conserving resources. What sets 'reuse' apart is its focus on the conservation of previous efforts (and resources). Reuse is about using an item until it is worn out or no longer performs the function it was originally intended to do, then finding another useful purpose for it until it is no longer useful in that role. It often involves some amount of maintenance, repair, or refurbishment. A familiar concept in the 19th century, when old clothing was made into quilts to keep people warm and traveling tinker wagons offered secondhand, traded goods, reuse values were eclipsed over time by a drive for convenience and efficiency. It is only recently in our human evolution that we have been prioritizing solutions that are not just fast and easy, but primarily

disposable. Only now are we realizing the total cost of convenience in terms of the depletion of the Earth's finite natural resources and accelerating the generation of climate-changing gases. We've also now experienced the poor craftsmanship and quality resulting from a drive for faster and cheaper products. This new awareness, along with the need to reduce the amount of waste that we are generating, will help renew the focus on extending an existing product's lifetime.

Support and change at the State level

In order to address the reuse challenge in earnest, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) developed the Commonwealth's first-ever comprehensive Reduce and Reuse Action Plan and released it in December

2021. The Plan, which was developed with the input of hundreds of Massachusetts stakeholders, explains the need, identifies barriers, stakeholders, and measures of progress, and develops a vision for future change. Short, medium, and long-term priority strategies are presented across seven categories, over which MassDEP has some influence, including education, technical assistance, job training, legislation, and grant opportunities.

To access a copy of the Action Plan and learn more about its development process, visit MassDEP's Reduce and Reuse Working Group webpage (Google "MassDEP R&R").

Support and change at the local level: Never underestimate the power of a small group of concerned people

Individuals, volunteers, and pub-

lic and private organizations have proved to be indispensable catalysts for awareness-building and change. Reuse efforts have thrived through programs, activities, and events, such as retail used goods and repair shops, community swap shops, exchanges, and repair events, maker spaces, and redistribution centers. Some municipally-based reuse events have been funded through MassDEP's Recycling Dividends Grant Program. Technological solutions have played a role as well, with online used clothing sales apps and local gifting apps like Freecycle.com and Facebook-based Buy Nothing groups facilitating used product exchanges. Where there are people and organizations with the passion, energy, and resources to create change, change ensues in a beautiful and inspiring way.



Instead of throwing them away, we can reuse, restore, and refurbish durable goods like furniture and architectural fixtures. Using goods in their original form until they can no longer be used can save an enormous amount of resources. Before you purchase new items, consider looking in used building material, architectural salvage, and used furniture stores.



Photo: Pauline Dongala

Use it up, wear it out, make it do

Adam's Old Stone Mill Zero Waste Maker Space extends the working lives of bicycles by connecting them to people in other countries. Recently, over 100 as-is bicycles were sent to a village in Cameroon lacking access to automobiles, and in 2021 a load of bicycles was sent (with spare parts and repair equipment) to a school in the Republic of Congo after being outfitted with sturdy racks, capable of holding hundreds of pounds of people, water jugs, or firewood. In addition to operating a printmaking studio, a metal fabrication shop, and a sewing center, the Old Stone Mill Center collects and redistributes discarded manufactured materials, including art supplies, brewery grain bags, and commercial linen discards (e.g. sheets, tablecloths, & uniforms).

Composting isn't new, but it deserves renewed attention

Composting has been around for millions of years (literally), so ground-breaking discoveries are rare. What is ground-breaking is the speed with which it is gaining traction—and respect—as a community waste reduction strategy. According to 2019 waste characterization data from Massachusetts' Department of Environmental Protection, nearly twenty percent of the household waste disposed in our state can be composted.

Removing food waste from our trash allows us to turn it into a valuable soil amendment while reducing the need for landfills. Composting can also reduce the production of climate-changing gases, which are emitted as organic matter (food waste) decomposes in a landfill.

Composting advances are accelerating

Composting has officially reached the mainstream. Years ago it was something performed by avid gardeners and your nutty Aunt Jane, but as the amount of waste produced in the US skyrockets, and the options for disposing of waste dwindle, composting has emerged as a highly effective waste reduction tool for communities all over the U.S. San Francisco and Seattle were early adopters of mandatory composting rules, and more communities and state governments followed suit. Neighboring Vermont adopted a phased composting mandate in its 2012 Universal Recycling Law. With the final phase, which was implemented in 2020, all food scraps generated by businesses and resi-

dents in Vermont are banned from landfill disposal. Massachusetts launched a food waste disposal ban in 2014, affecting large generators of food waste. In November of 2022, the ban's minimum threshold was lowered, affecting more of the Commonwealth's food-centered businesses. Learn more about the food waste ban and helpful resources for businesses and institutions by visiting recycling-worksma.com.

In addition to state mandates, educational institutions have also entered the food waste diversion game. Many major universities and colleges—including Williams College—have campus compost collection programs that educate students as they reduce trash and disposal costs. Many K-12 schools are also actively composting

(including Pittsfield High, Hoosac Valley High, and Miss Hall's School).

Pick a composting method

Depending on where you live, Berkshire County households now have several options for diverting food waste. Home “backyard” composting is a low-cost and effective option for those with outdoor space. There are also some innovative products online that allow for composting indoors. Vermicomposting is also a suitable option for indoor composting. Food waste drop-off at local transfer stations is becoming more common, and there are several local compost businesses providing curbside food waste pickup. Discounted home composting units are often available through your local public works department, including the City of Pittsfield. For a list of the 173 Massachusetts that offer low-cost bins and information to get started with backyard composting, visit mass.gov and search for “home compost”.

Do This!

Not That!



Add plenty of brown material to your home compost bin to create the best composting environment. The microorganisms that break down organic material need a good mix of nitrogen-rich fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps (25%), and carbon-rich brown material like autumn leaves and shredded cardboard (75%).



Photo: Amy Donovan

“Cooking” compost

As the naturally occurring microorganisms in the pile break down organic material, they consume oxygen and release heat. Heat that builds inside a large commercial composting pile helps break down things that don't belong in backyard compost units, such as meat and dairy products. In this photo, Adam Martin of Martin's Farm Compost and Mulch in Greenfield stirs or “turns” a compost pile to introduce more oxygen. The heat generated by this “aerobic” composting method speeds the breakdown process and destroys many seeds and pathogens, but too much heat can kill beneficial microorganisms. Commercial facilities carefully monitor cooking temperatures to maintain a healthy balance.

WHAT DO I DO WITH...?

This A-Z disposal guide was designed to provide reuse, recycling or disposal options for items that are not accepted in municipal recycling, or to provide more information for some of the accepted items.

 = Items that are hazardous or require special handling.

AEROSOL CANS

Empty aerosol cans belong in the trash, unless they contain hazardous material (e.g. paint, insecticide), in which case they are household hazardous waste. A handful of transfer stations/recycling centers accept completely empty, non-hazardous aerosol cans in scrap metal dumpsters (empty cans are completely silent when the button is pushed). See the Community Recycling Information table in this guide for local disposal information. More info: mass.gov/info-details/safely-manage-hazardous-household-products.



ALUMINUM FOIL, CANS & "DISPOSABLE" PANS

Rinse clean & recycle with bottles & cans. Acceptable items include aluminum pie pans and take-out containers, disposable roasting pans, and clean aluminum foil (ball it up). The "foil" lids from yogurt containers should not be included, as they contain a layer of plastic that causes issues when the aluminum is melted down.

ALUMINUM SIDING (see "Scrap Metal")

AMMUNITION, EXPLOSIVES

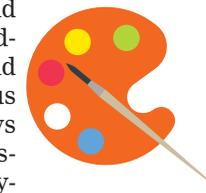
Call your Police Department for proper disposal instructions.

ANTIFREEZE (see "Automotive Products")

APPLIANCES (see "Scrap Metal")

ARTS, CRAFTS & HOBBY ITEMS

Some paints, solvents and related materials are considered hazardous and should be brought to a hazardous waste collection. Always check the label before tossing in the trash. Crazycray-



ons.com offers a crayon recycling program and terracycle.com offers mail-in programs for many art supplies, markers, and pens. The Town of Sheffield accepts these items in its library. The Crayon Initiative (thecrayoninitiative.org) collects used crayons and gives them to children in hospitals.

ASBESTOS

There are strict removal & disposal requirements for asbestos. Contact the Western Region of the Mass Department of Environmental Protection: David Slowick; david.slowick@mass.gov, 413-348-7186. To find licensed asbestos contractors, go to mass.gov and type "Asbestos Contractors" into the search bar.

AUTOMOBILES (see "Vehicles")

AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS

Automotive products contain hazardous materials & must be handled with care. Do not dispose of them in the trash, on the ground or down the drain. Empty plastic automotive product jugs belong in the trash (replace caps first). Do not recycle them.

Many towns accept automotive products at transfer stations or hazardous waste collections.

• Motor oil

Even a small amount of improperly disposed of motor oil will contaminate water & soil. In Massachusetts, retailers that sell motor oil are required by law to accept up to two gallons of used oil at no charge with an original sales receipt. Many auto supply stores, auto repair shops and quick oil change chains will accept used oil even if you didn't buy it from them. Many towns accept motor oil at transfer stations or hazardous waste collections. For assistance, call the MassDEP Used Oil Hotline at 617-556-1022.

• Motor oil filters

Some auto supply stores (e.g. AutoZone) or auto repair shops accept oil filters for free recycling. Some municipal transfer stations accept motor oil filters. Oil filters may be thrown away or recycled in scrap metal collections only when the oil has been completely drained (while filter is still warm, puncture the dome top & drain into a collection container. Collect oil drips and dispose of properly as used motor oil; see above entry).

• Antifreeze

Antifreeze is not only hazardous; its deceiving color & sweet taste may attract children, pets & wild animals. Consider having your ve-

hicle's radiator flushed at a service station to avoid the responsibility associated with proper storage & disposal. Some auto supply stores accept antifreeze for free recycling. Antifreeze should be brought to a household hazardous waste collection.

• Brake fluid

Brake fluid is hazardous and must be brought to a household hazardous waste collection.

• Car parts

Search online or in the yellow pages for used auto/truck parts. Call ahead. George Mielke Used Auto Parts in Sheffield and Drake's in Lee are two examples.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

shop smart
shop here



Berkshire Food Co-op

34 Bridge St. Great Barrington

413-528-9697

@berkshirecoop

www.berkshire.coop

• **Tires**

Some auto repair and tire shops accept tires for a small fee.

BABY FOOD POUCHES (see “Plastic Pouches”)

BAGS (see “Plastics”)

BALLASTS ⚠ (see “Mercury & Mercury-containing Products”)

BATTERIES ⚠

Never put batteries of any type in a regular recycling bin. Options for recycling are listed below; However, common single-use household batteries (alkaline, carbon zinc and zinc chloride in sizes A, AA, AAA, C & D, 9 volt, lantern size) manufactured after 1996 that do not contain mercury or other hazardous/recyclable materials can be thrown away as trash. (Before disposal or storage, put plastic packing or electrical tape on the contacts of 9-volts and lantern batteries.) Check labels carefully; some batteries that require special han-

dling resemble alkaline batteries.

ALL other battery varieties contain hazardous materials and require special disposal. Never put these batteries in recycling or trash bins.

There are many convenient drop-off options for batteries, such as municipal transfer stations, Staples, Home Depot, and Berkshire Environmental Action Team (thebeatnews.org). See the Community Recycling Information table in this guide or search online with your zip code at earth911.com. Some hazardous waste collections accept batteries.

More options for specific batteries:

• **Button batteries** (found in watches, hearing aids, electronics & some toys) are accepted free of charge at watch/jewelry shops or audiologist offices.

• **Lead acid batteries** (found in vehicles, boats, motorcycles, kids’ ride-on toys, lawn mowers) will be accepted by the retailer

from whom you buy a new one (they are required to take one back at no charge). Scrap metal recyclers

typically pay for lead acid batteries. Some transfer stations accept them.

• **Lithium batteries** (single use battery often used for cameras) can resemble alkaline batteries, but these should be recycled properly: some municipalities accept them. Check all batteries carefully before disposal; look for “Lithium” on the label.

• Rechargeable batteries contain heavy metals and can start fires; they should never be put in trash or recycling bins. Rechargeable batteries are found in rechargeable electronics such as cell phones, cordless phones, power tools, laptops, tablets, digital cameras, camcorders, UPS battery back-ups, rechargeable toys, baby monitors, robotic vacuum cleaners, emergency medical equipment, e-bikes, rechargeable devices such as toothbrushes, razors, flashlights and hand-held vacuum cleaners, plus batteries that can be recharged with a battery charger. Most transfer stations have special pails or boxes for rechargeable batteries, as do Home Depot, Lowes, and Staples stores. Rechargeable battery chem-

istries are Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd), Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion (Li-ion), Nickel-Zinc (Ni-Zn), and small Sealed Lead Acid (Pb) batteries (up to 11 pounds). A label on a battery that has “mAh” or “RECYCLE - RBRC” in a circle indicates a rechargeable battery. For more information and options for recycling rechargeable batteries, go to call2recycle.org. Lithium batteries pose fire risk: if a lithium battery becomes swollen or damaged, handle carefully and bag separately, then place the battery in a metal canister or glass jar surrounded by clay kitty litter or speedy dry. Bring to your town’s transfer station or hazardous waste site.

BEER AND SODA PACKAGING

It may look recyclable, but beer and soda cartons or cases contain plastic or bonding chemicals so that they stay strong when wet. The plastic and chemicals contaminate recyclable paper. Please place all “paper” beer and soda packaging in the trash.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



RECYCLE in WESTERN MASS

Yes please recycle these papers & containers:



Paper: envelopes with windows, magazines, newspapers, inserts, junk mail, post-it notes, business cards, catalogs, white and colored paper, corrugated cardboard, paperboard (for example, cereal boxes), empty pizza boxes (no food or liners), paperback books, construction paper, gift wrap/bags/tissue paper and greeting cards (no metallic inks, foil, wire, glitter, batteries)

Empty and clean all containers. Replace lids and caps.

Aluminum: cans, foil, pie pans
Steel: (tin) cans, beverage and pet food cans
Cartons: milk, juice, soup, soymilk and drink boxes

Glass: food, beverage bottles and jars

Plastics: (2.5 gallons or less) food containers—margarine, yogurt, cooking oil, condiments, peanut butter; beverage bottles and jugs—soda, water, juice, milk; clear plastic clamshells, clear plastic egg cartons, clear plastic cups; personal care bottles—shampoo, soap, conditioner; detergent bottles

No Plastic bags, color or opaque plastic cups, automotive fluid bottles, black plastic, plastics over 2.5 gallons, paper frozen food packaging, Styrofoam™, textiles, batteries*

*For a complete YES & NO list of what can be recycled, visit www.springfieldmrf.org.

Plastic six-pack rings and four-pack “snap top” can carriers are not accepted in household recycling. Flexible plastic six-pack rings get wrapped around sorting equipment at recycling facilities and pose a danger to wildlife. Cut up rings and put in the trash or collect and mail six-pack rings to the RingRecycleMe program (ringrecycleme.com).

“Snap top” six or four-pack can carriers are often made with 100% recycled plastic, which provides a market for recycled plastic. However, snap tops are not acceptable in recycling because their size and shape make them challenging to sort. Mass Brew Bros has established a can carrier reuse program; save your snap tops and find a drop off location near you at: massbrewbros.com/can-carrier-recycling-and-paktech-opi.com.

BICYCLES

Working bicycles in good condition may be gifted to individuals via an online sharing group (e.g. a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group or Freecycle.org), or offered to charities (search online via “bicycle donation”) and other organizations that will use them. The Old Stone Mill Center (oldstonemillcenter.org) in Adams accepts bicycles and bicycle parts. For recycling options, see “scrap metal.”

BOATS

See disposal suggestions under “Vehicles.” Metal boats are accepted at scrap metal dealers, while other varieties are sometimes accepted as bulky waste at municipal transfer stations (call to inquire, see local contact info in the Community Recycling Information table in this guide). All engine-type fluids must first be drained and properly disposed of.

BOOKS

Books in good condition may be sold (used bookstores, tag sales), donated (public libraries, senior centers, fund-raising sales, drop boxes at transfer stations), or shared (book exchanges, swap shop). “Little free libraries” have grown in popularity; find one near you at: littlefreelibrary.org/map.

Paperback books & phonebooks are considered recyclable in small quantities, as are only the pages of hard-



back books. Rip pages out and recycle those. Covers and spines from hardcover books must be placed in the trash.



BOTTLE CAPS & LIDS

Plastic caps & lids are recyclable only when fastened to a plastic bottle / jar / jug / tub, so you can keep the lid on! Loose plastic tops should be placed in the trash as they can create safety hazards and shutdowns at recycling facilities. Metal screw-top lids from glass jars (e.g. pasta sauce, pickle jar) should be attached to the container. Loose metal food can lids are acceptable, but it is best to push them inside the can prior to recycling.

BOXES

Clean cardboard, boxboard, and paperboard boxes are recyclable (e.g., boxes from cereal, crackers, tissues, shoes, gifts, etc.) Attached plastic windows may stay, but discard all plastic liners. Flatten.



Pizza Boxes are recyclable, as long as they are empty. A 2020 study found that greasy pizza boxes do NOT cause problems for recycled paper manufacturers. It is now OK to put the entire empty pizza box into recycling (remove all crusts, food, foil, plastic, or waxed paper). Link to the study: tinyurl.com/pizzaboxes2020

Boxes from frozen food, ice cream, cases from soda or beer, and kitty litter boxes should be placed in the trash as they are not acceptable in recycling or composting. These boxes are made with “wet strength paper,” which contains plastic or bonding chemicals that help the boxes to stay strong when wet. The plastic and chemicals contaminate recyclable paper.

BUBBLE WRAP & INFLATED PLASTIC PACKAGING (Air pillows) (see “Plastics”)

BUILDING & REMODELING MATERIALS

Construction & demolition (“C&D”) waste includes asphalt, asphalt shingles, bricks, cement, cinder blocks, clapboard, concrete, doors, flooring, insulation, lumber,

mortar, plaster, plywood, roofing, sheetrock, tiles, windows & wood. Fee-based disposal options are available at many recycling/transfer stations; for more information, call the phone number listed for your town in the Community Recycling Information table in this guide. Vehicles with a capacity greater than 5 cubic yards are subject to strict disposal requirements for C&D wastes in MA. For more information: mass.gov/lists/managing-construction-demolition-cd-wastes.

Used building materials in good condition can be donated to a reuse store such as the Central Berkshire Habitat Restore in Pittsfield, MA (413-443-2106; berkshirerestore.org/). They accept used building materials in good condition. Call prior to delivery to confirm that your materials will be accepted, or to arrange for free pickup if donating large quantities. Items might be tax-deductible. Commercial locations include E.L. Harvey & Sons, Richmond, Ma-508-836-3000; Ondrick Materials and Recycling Chicopee, 413-592-2081; and Van Dyk Recycling, Norwalk, CT 203-967-1100.

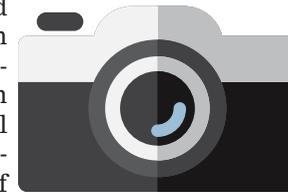
Other resources include RecyclingWorksMA’s Find a Recycler Tool (recyclingworksma.com/find-

a-recycler), Freecycle.org, Buy Nothing groups on Facebook; and the Nextdoor app.

Wooden pallets can be reused or recycled as “clean wood waste.” Disposal options for large quantities include (but are not limited to) Martin’s Farm (Greenfield: 413-774-5631), 360 Recycling (Westfield: 413-562-0193).

Note: pressure-treated wood should only be disposed of in a landfill. Do not put it in a backyard compost pile, a brush or chipping pile; do not burn it or send it to a waste incinerator for disposal. For bulky waste disposal at local transfer stations, see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide.

CAMERAS



Staples stores, and many electronic waste (e-waste) recycling programs accept digital cameras for free recycling. Non-digital cameras may be accepted as donations to schools or other organizations.

CANNING JARS

Canning jars (e.g. mason jars) are not recyclable because of the thick, heat resistant glass. Reuse, give to a friend who can use them, put in a tag sale or swap shop at a transfer station, or place in the trash.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Did You Know?

Nearly 95 percent of Massachusetts residents report that they recycle on a regular basis.

Recycle Smart

CARPET

Flor® offers a free mail-back recycling program for carpet squares (flor.com/recycle). Some nonprofit organizations accept relatively clean carpet for reuse. For local disposal information, see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide.



CARTONS & DRINK BOXES

This category includes “gable top” refrigerated cartons used for milk and orange juice, plus shelf-stable “aseptic packaging” for almond milk, soup, and juice boxes. Cartons are acceptable in recycling programs in Western Mass. In recycling programs where paper is separated, cartons should be recycled along with bottles, cans, and containers. Rinse cartons, discard straws; plastic caps & spouts may remain on cartons. Do not flatten.

Ice cream cartons are not accepted in recycling. Don't include foil drink pouches (e.g., Capri Sun, Honest Kids) in municipal recycling. See “Plastic Pouches” in this guide for recycling options.

CARTRIDGES (see “Ink, Printer & Toner Cartridges”)

CD'S/DVD'S (See “Electronic Media”)

CELL PHONES ☞

Cell phones should not be put in the trash due to their reuse value & hazardous/recyclable components. Never put cell phones in recycling bins. Numerous charitable & for-profit organizations accept cell phone donations. Search online using “cell phone donation.” Stores that sell cell phones also accept them for free recycling, and many cell phone manufacturers offer buy-back programs through the mail. Many municipal transfer stations also accept them for special recycling programs, along with Staples and Berkshire Environmental Action Team (thebeatnews.org). For locations, search with your zip code at call2recycle.org/locator or earth911.com.



CHRISTMAS TREES (see “Yard Waste”)

Some organizations collect holiday greens (NO tinsel, wire, or sprayed items) and bring them to local farms. The Lee Lions Club does this annually and information can be found on Lee's Town website during the holidays.

CIGARETTE BUTTS

Terracycle's Free Cigarette Waste Recycling Program (terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/cigarette-waste-recycling) accepts extinguished cigarettes, filters, loose tobacco pouches, outer plastic and inner foil packaging for recycling into plastic lumber and other products.

CLAMSHELLS & CLEAR MOLDED PLASTICS (see “Plastics”)

CLEANERS (see “Household Hazardous Waste”)



CLOTHING & TEXTILES

As of November 1st 2022, textiles are banned from the trash in Massachusetts (more info at mass.gov/guides/textile-recovery). There are many local reuse & donation opportunities for all textiles & shoes. Deliver CLEAN & DRY textiles & clothing to drop-off boxes serviced by organizations such as the Salvation Army (easternusa.salvationarmy.org) & donation centers such as Goodwill Industries (goodwill.org). Many municipal transfer stations host textile drop boxes, refer to the Community Recycling Information table. DO include items that are torn, stained, with missing buttons or broken zippers, as these organizations sell damaged textiles to recyclers to be made into wiping cloths and insulation. Acceptable items include these CLEAN & DRY items: mismatched socks, shoes and gloves; all clothing and accessories including belts, ties, underwear & purses; and linens such as curtains, toss pillows, light comforters, sheets, towels, and stuffed animals in any condition. Some animal shelters also accept old sheets, blankets, pillowcases, bedspreads, throw rugs & towels for reuse (call first).

The Berkshires has local clothing consignment stores for quality used clothing, such as Berkshire

Baby, Designer Consignor, Boho Exchange, and Kidding Around. See also thredup.com, swap.com, poshmark.com, and wornwear.pagonia.com.

Bras can be donated to Salvation Army or Goodwill; any items that are not in good condition will be baled and sold for textile recycling. New & gently used bras can be mailed to The Bra Recyclers for distribution to women in transition around the world: brarecycling.com; 480-988-2283.

Some local non-profit organizations target specific types of clothing to benefit those in need, such as professional clothing (western-mass.dressforsuccess.org).

Here are a few examples local drop-off locations: Sheffield – Town hall, senior center; Great Barrington – Goodwill; Lee – Goodwill, Post Office, Lee Premium Outlets; Lenox – Hope Church; Pittsfield – BEAT Community Center;. See the Community Recycling Information table for a detailed listed of transfer stations with textile recycling.

To inquire about curbside pickup, try CMRK (www.cmrkne.com; 508.466.4590) that serves some of Berkshire County, and Hartsprings Foundation (hartsprings.org/), which serves Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, and Pittsfield.



COAT HANGERS

Do not put hangers of any type in recycling bins: hangers get caught in machinery at recycling facilities. Metal hangers are accepted for reuse by some dry cleaners & are also accepted in scrap metal recycling dumpsters at most recycling/transfer stations. Unfortunately, plastic hangers are not recyclable and should be put in trash when they are no longer useable. Hangers are reusable; offer via an online sharing group (e.g. Freecycle.org, “Buy Nothing” Facebook group). Some charitable organizations accept hangers for reuse or resale.

COMPACT FLUORESCENT LAMPS (CFLS) ☞ (“see Mercury & Mercury-containing Products”)

COMPUTERS & TV'S (see “Electronics”)

CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION WASTE (see “Building & Remodeling Materials”)

COOKING OIL

Never pour cooking oil down the drain. Liquids should be kept out of trash, recycling, and municipal compost bins. Some local food waste services may collect certain types of oil. Call your local Board of Health for local information on how to dispose.

CORKS

Corks should never be put in recycling bins, carts, or dumpsters; remove corks from bottles before recycling. Natural corks can be composted via local/municipal/commercial composting programs or chopped up & added to a backyard compost bin. ReCORK recycles natural wine & champagne corks (no plastic corks); multiple local drop off sites are listed at recork.org. There are no local recycling options for plastic corks.



Terracycle offers a fee-based recycling program for corks of any type: terracycle.com. Reuse is an option; wine corks can be reused in many creative ways (search online for “cork art”).

COSMETICS CONTAINERS

Not recyclable in municipal recycling programs. Mail-in recycling programs for empty cosmetics containers can be found at terracycle.com and maccosmetics.com/giving_back/back_to_mac.tmpl

CUPS

Clear plastic cups are the only type of cups accepted in household recycling (rinse; lids and straws go in the trash). Other types of plastic cups are NOT acceptable for recycling: “Styrofoam”/polystyrene (#6 plastic), colored keg cups, and opaque plastic cups. Mail-in recycling programs for #6 cups can be found at terracycle.com.

If a cup is labeled “compostable,” it should NOT go in recycling. Compostable cups are accepted in some municipal or local compost programs. “Compostable plastic” products are not designed to compost at home.

Paper cups, including traditional paper coffee cups, are not recyclable. Plastic coffee cup lids are too small to be recycled. Cardboard

sleeves are recyclable. If paper coffee cups (and some lids) are designed to be compostable in municipal/commercial compost programs, it will have a label that says “BPI certified” or “compostable.”

EGG CARTONS

Clear plastic egg cartons are recyclable. Paper & Styrofoam™ egg cartons are not accepted in recycling, but are often reused by backyard chicken farmers. Paper cartons may be composted in municipal compost collections or in home compost bins, if ripped into pieces.

ELECTRONICS ⚠

State regulations prohibit disposal of screen-based electronics such as laptops, tablets, iPads, Kindles, flat screen TVs, monitors and CRTs (cathode ray tubes) in the trash. Most municipal transfer stations offer electronics recycling programs, although disposal fees may apply; see your town’s website or call town hall for pricing. Electronics that are mostly metal, such as computer towers, DVD players, and stereo components can also go in scrap metal recycling at transfer stations and recycle centers.

Staples stores accept computer-related electronic waste for free recycling; call your local store for details. Staples does not accept TVs. The Lenox Transfer Station accepts most TVs for a fee based on their size. Computer manufacturers sometimes offer electronics recycling or trade-in programs; visit their websites for details. Various charities and non-profits accept donations of working electronics, including local Salvation Army and Goodwill stores. Always call ahead to ask if they can accept your item.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA (CDs, DVDs, VHS, Cassette Tapes)

Do not put electronic media or cases in your household recycling, put them in the trash. CD cases easily shatter, and the glass-like shards create hazards at the recycling facility. If selling or donating used media is not an option (some communities accept certain types via book donation programs), greendisk.com and terracycle.com

(enter “media” into search bar) offer fee-based, mail-in recycling options.



EYEGLASSES

Contact your local Lion’s Club (lionsclubs.org) for the nearest collection box or mail eyeglass frames and prescription lenses to: Lions Clubs International Headquarters, 300 W. 22nd Street, Oak Brook, IL 60523. In addition, eyeglasses may be dropped in a collection box at a participating Walmart Vision Center. The Lee Public Library collects them and other libraries might also. If eyeglasses can’t be reused, put in the household trash, as they are not recyclable. Bausch and Lomb will recycle contact lenses, working with Terracycle.

FERTILIZERS & PESTICIDES ⚠ (see “Household Hazardous Waste”)

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ⚠

Fire extinguishers are considered hazardous because their contents are under pressure, and units manufactured prior to 1984 may contain dangerous chemicals. For disposal and recycling:

- Businesses & property managers can contact their fire control service provider.
- Some municipal transfer stations accept newer fire extinguishers for special recycling along with propane tanks.
- Some municipal hazardous waste collections may accept older fire extinguishers: ask before bringing them to a collection.

FIREWORKS ⚠

Live fireworks are extremely dangerous and must be disposed of with great caution; call your local Fire Department. Do not throw unused fireworks in the trash or household recycling.

FLAGS

To properly dispose of U.S. flags no longer in usable condition, contact the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), your town hall, or scout troops. Other flags may be recycled in textile recycling programs.

FLUORESCENT BULBS & LAMPS ⚠ (see “Mercury & Mercury-containing Products”)

FOOD SCRAPS (also see “Cooking Oil”)

Food scraps and leftovers are heavy to transport and contribute to the climate crisis when they decompose in landfills; composting food waste locally makes better environmental and economic sense. Local composting options include home composting, curbside pick-up by a private compost service, municipal transfer station compost programs (in Williamstown, New Marlborough, and Egremont), and local farm programs (such as Meadow Farm in Lee). To find a private compost service, visit: Recyclingworksma.com. Many municipalities offer discounted purchase programs for countertop collection pails and home compost bins. For home composting instructions, visit mass.gov and search for “home compost.”

As of November 2022, Massachusetts businesses, organizations and institutions that create ½ ton of food waste per week will be required to keep it out of the trash and instead reduce it, donate it, or send it out for animal feed, composting, or anaerobic digestion. RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts provides free assistance, food waste estimation tools, hauler lists, and more at: recyclingworksma.com

FRUIT SNACK POUCHES (see “Plastic Pouches”)

FURNITURE

Furniture in good condition can be sold, donated for reuse, or offered via an online sharing group (e.g. Freecycle.org or a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group). Consignment shops for certain children’s furniture is also a viable option, such as Bloom Kids Consignment and Kidding Around Consignment. If not reusable, see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide for disposal information (“bulky waste”). As of November 2022, mattresses and box springs may no longer go in the trash. See “Mattresses” for more information.



GOLF BALLS AND CLUBS

Golf balls can’t be recycled, but they may be reused. Contact local golf courses or driving ranges to see if they will accept them or donate them, along with clubs, to First Tee-Massachusetts programs to empower kids and teens through golf (firstteemass.org; click on “donate”). Some thrift stores will accept clubs for resale. Instant Replay in Pittsfield is an example of a sports equipment consignment shop that may accept these items in-season.

GREETING CARDS

Cards are recyclable with paper if they do not contain metallic inks, glitter, foil, or batteries. Remove electronics from singing greeting cards & recycle button batteries in battery recycling programs (see “Batteries”). St. Jude’s Ranch for Children runs a mail-in greeting card reuse program; note restrictions on certain brands: stjude-ranch.org/recycled-card-program.

HANGERS (see “Coat Hangers”)

HEARING AIDS

The National Hearing Aid Project accepts used hearing aids for refurbishment and distribution to those that need them: hearingaid-donations.org, 816-895-2410. Also check with your hearing aid specialist for reuse options. If your hearing aid is not worth salvaging, remove the button battery and recycle it in a battery recycling program (see “Batteries”), then place the hearing aid in the trash.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ⚠

First, consider using up the product according to package directions, or giving it away to someone who will. Products with label warnings & words like caustic, toxic, corrosive, poison, flammable, danger & “keep out of reach of children” all require special handling. Most Berkshire municipalities arrange for annual household hazardous waste collections for their residents. Refer to the Community Recycling Information table in this Guide to learn more. New England Disposal Technologies (Westfield, MA) accepts many household hazardous wastes year-round for modest fees (nedt.org; 866-769-1621). Empty containers that once contained hazardous wastes are NOT accepted in recycling; replace caps and put empty



CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

containers in trash. For safer alternatives to hazardous household products visit: lesstoxicguide.ca, or turi.org/Our_Work/Community.

INK, PRINTER & TONER CARTRIDGES

Staples and Target stores accept used cartridges for reuse or recycling. Other options may be found via a search on earth911.com or find mail-in donation programs online by searching “cartridge donations.” Many manufactures have their own take back programs with free mailing labels. Search online for “(name of manufacturer) cartridge recycling program.” As one example, Planet Green Injects (www.pgink-jets.com/; 800.377.1093) pays for used inkjet cartridges and remanufactures them.

JUNK MAIL & CATALOGS

Unwanted mail & catalogs are recyclable, but it makes more sense to reduce them at the source. Here are four free services to do so:

- Remove your name from commercial mailing lists: directmail.com/mail_preference;
- Stop delivery of unwanted catalogs, enter catalog name at catalogchoice.org;
- End pre-approved credit card & insurance offers: optoutprescreen.com;
- Take your name off phonebook mailing lists: yellowpagesoptout.com



com;

- Take your name off phonebook mailing lists: yellowpagesoptout.com

KEYS

Unwanted keys can be recycled via a scrap metal dumpster at a municipal transfer station (see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide,) or brought to a local scrap metal dealer.

LATEX PAINT (see “Paint & Paint-related Products”)

LIGHT BULBS

Light bulbs of all types should be kept out of recycling bins. Fluorescent bulbs, including “CFLs” should be kept out of trash.

- Fluorescent bulbs, including compact fluorescent bulbs (“CFLs”) and the green tipped “low mercury” type contain mercury vapor and require special disposal. See “mercury & mercury-containing products” in this guide for more information.

Handle carefully to avoid breakage.

- LED light bulbs can go in the trash but contain valuable materials and may be recycled with CFLs, if a collection site accepts them (see “mercury & mercury-containing products”).

- Incandescent light bulbs and halogen light bulbs are not recyclable. Wrap incandescent light bulbs in used paper or plastic before placing them in the trash.



LIGHT STRINGS

Holiday light strings are NOT accepted in municipal recycling programs because they get wrapped around sorting equipment at recycling facilities, causing hazards for workers. Light strings are often accepted at scrap metal dealers and in scrap metal dumpsters at transfer stations. Broken string lights can be mailed to Christmas Light Source (christmas-light-source.com) or Holiday LEDs (holidayleds.com) for a discount on a future order.

MARDI GRAS BEADS

Mail unwanted Mardi Gras beads and trinkets to the Arc of Greater New Orleans’ reuse program: Arc-GNO, 925 Labarre Road, Metairie, LA 70001 (arcgno.org; 504-369-4033).

MATTRESSES & BOX SPRINGS

As of November 2022, mattresses and box springs may no longer go in trash or Bulky Waste. Mattress recycling is now mandatory in MA, except for mattresses that are contaminated. Some charities will accept mattresses & box springs in very good condition; call first. When you purchase a new mattress, ask the retailer to take back and recycle the old one. Some transfer stations in the Berkshires accept mattresses for recycling (such as the Town of Dalton); fees apply. For local recycling information, search on your town’s website or call your town’s contact number in the Community Recycling Information table in this guide. If your municipality does not have a collection program, call a private junk hauler to pick up your mattress. Tough Stuff Recycling



(978.307.4118; toughstuffrecycling.com/) serves several communities in Berkshire County and offers curbside pickup. For information on other options, visit mass.gov and search for “mattress.”

MEDICATIONS & PHARMACEUTICALS

Disposal of unwanted medication must be done carefully for several important reasons. Medications should NOT be poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet. Wastewater treatment plants & septic systems are not designed to remove pharmaceuticals from wastewater. Medications should not be thrown in the trash; see below for disposal options.

Help protect the environment and stop prescription drug misuse and abuse. Bring your unwanted, expired, or unused medications to one of the sites below for safe disposal.

Many area police departments offer permanent drop-off boxes for free disposal of prescription and nonprescription drugs, vitamins, and veterinary medications. You do not need to be a resident to use these drop boxes.

NO liquids, syringes (see “Needles & Sharps” below), IV equip-

ment or chemotherapy drugs. For more information visit northwesternnda.org/addiction-recovery/pages/drug-drop-boxes.

National chain pharmacies host free drop boxes for prescription medications. Call your local store for availability or search a DEA listing of disposal sites at tinyurl.com/deadisp. For acceptable items, see signage on the drop boxes, call stores or visit pharmacy websites. Some stores that do not have drop boxes offer the DisposeRX program: disposerx.com

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days are scheduled for every April and October. Find dates and locations for upcoming collections by visiting deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback

If you are truly unable to deliver medications to a drop box or a take-back day, medications may be safely disposed of in the following manner: 1.) Remove any personal info from labels that could be used to obtain refills; 2.) Render medications unattractive to children, pets & thieves by dissolving pills or tablets in a small amount of water or rubbing alcohol (pour liquid medication into a



CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

PACKAGING MATERIALS

(also see “Plastics”)

Online purchasing has increased the amount of packaging in the residential waste stream. Most of these materials are reusable; some are also recyclable:

- Cardboard boxes can be reused. Cardboard boxes should be recycled in municipal recycling programs; flatten if possible.
- Packing paper is reusable as well as recyclable.
- Amazon’s paper mailer that says “Recycle this mailer just like a box” is recyclable in municipal recycling programs.
- Plastic envelope mailers (single layer or bubble wrap) used by online retailers such as Amazon are recyclable with plastic bags (see “plastics”) in grocery/retail store recycling programs only. Do not put plastic mailers, bags, films, or other “soft plastics” in household recycling.
- Plastic sealed air packaging and bubble wrap are reusable and are accepted for reuse by some pack & ship stores. Deflated air pillows and bubble wrap can be recycled with plastic bags (see “plastics”) in grocery store recycling programs. Do not put in household recycling.
- Paper envelopes with bubble wrap on the inside are not accepted in recycling programs. Reuse or put in the trash.
- Meal delivery kits use thermal box liners (e.g. “Renewliner,” “QLiner,” “Climacell”) to keep food fresh. This packaging might claim recyclability, but it is not accepted in household recycling programs. Reuse, refuse (send back to company), or put in the trash.
- Styrofoam™ blocks & shapes: not accepted in recycling; see “Plastics”
- Foam peanuts: not accepted in recycling; see “Plastics”
- Cornstarch peanuts may be composted in a backyard bin, reused, or placed in the trash. However, these are not accepted by commercial composting facilities or at packing shipping stores.

container of kitty litter or sand); 3.) Place in two sealed plastic bags; and 4.) Conceal the package in your trash. If you have large quantities of medications, consider disposing of them in smaller batches over time or bringing to a collection or drop box. Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet or drain unless the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs you to do so.

Due to their small size and other factors, empty pill bottles are not recyclable. Be creative with reuse! For example, some animal shelters collect washed, empty pill bottles to send medicines home with adoptees. Berkshire Amistad (berkshireamistad.org/), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit located on Route 41 near West Stockbridge, accepts empty pill bottles and a wide range of medical supplies, which are then trucked to Honduras to fill critical needs there. Mathew 25:Ministries 513-793-6256 also accepts empty and clean pill bottles.

MERCURY & MERCURY-CONTAINING PRODUCTS ☠

Mercury is highly toxic and requires special disposal. It is not hazardous when contained in a

sealed device. Reduce exposure by placing items in sealed plastic bags & handling them carefully to avoid breakage. Never put mercury (or items containing mercury) in trash or recycling bins, on the ground, or down a drain. Don't vacuum even the smallest spill. Instructions for handling mercury exposure can be found at: mass.gov; enter "mercury" in the search bar or search the web for "broken CFL" or "mercury spill." If a mercury spill does occur, follow the MassDEP's guide on safely cleaning it up: mass.gov/guides/massdep-mercury-information. Call the Mass DEP Mercury Hotline if you have questions about mercury or managing it safely: 866-9MERCURY (866-963-7287).

For local disposal information for the following mercury items, see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide.

• **Fluorescent light bulbs**

All fluorescent light bulbs (even the low-mercury bulbs with green tips) contain mercury vapor; never put fluorescent light bulbs in trash or recycling. For local disposal information see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide. In addition:

- Businesses can see a list of vendors who can pick up larger quantities at recyclingworksma.com.
- Residents can refer to the MassDEP's Mercury Disposal Map: tinyurl.com/MassMercuryMap
- For assistance with disposal outlets, dial the MassDEP Mercury Hotline at: (866) 9-MERCURY

Recycling options vary based on the type of bulb:

- **Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)** fit in standard screw-type light sockets & are made of a glass tube. They come in a variety of shapes and styles and can be encased by an outer glass bulb. CFLs



are accepted at most municipal transfer stations (handle carefully and hand to attendant) and some Hazardous Waste Collections. For local disposal information see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide. Free recycling for CFL bulbs is offered at the Pittsfield Home Depot. New England Disposal Technologies (Westfield, MA) accepts CFL & fluorescent tubes year-round for various fees (nedt.org; 866-769-1621).

• Larger fluorescent tubes are the types of bulbs that do not fit in standard screw-type sockets. These include long straight tubes, circular or U-shaped tubes, tanning bed lamps, High Intensity Discharge (HIDs), & neon light tubing. These may be accepted at municipal transfer stations and some Hazardous Waste Collections; see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide for local disposal information. Straight lamps and all others may be accepted at Home Depot. Handle carefully to avoid breakage; do not tape bulbs together.

• **Thermometers**

Many older household thermometers (fever, candy, meat, deep fry, oven, temperature) contain liquid mercury. A mercury thermometer can be identified by the presence of a silver bulb at the end of a glass tube. Accepted in special programs at many municipal transfer stations and some Hazardous Waste Collections; see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide for local disposal information. Handle carefully and seal in a plastic bag. If the

thermometer liquid and bulb is red, blue, purple or green, it is not a mercury thermometer and it can go in the trash.

• **Thermostats**

Updating to a programmable thermostat? Don't throw away your old wall-mounted thermostats: they contain a significant amount of liquid mercury. Leave thermostats in one piece, place in a sealed plastic bag, and handle carefully to avoid breakage. In addition to special municipal collection programs (see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide), mercury thermostats are accepted for free recycling by some plumbers and plumbing retail stores. For local drop-off locations, go to thermostat-recycle.org.

• **Ballasts**

Most fluorescent light fixtures produced before 1979 contained ballasts with PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), a highly toxic substance. PCB-free ballasts are marked "No PCBs." PCB ballasts are typically collected in special programs at transfer stations or other sites that collect larger fluorescent tube-type bulbs. Electronic and other non-PCB ballasts are safe to go into trash or bulky waste, but are often not accepted in scrap metal recycling bins. See the Community Recycling Information table in this guide for local disposal information.

MICROWAVES (see "Scrap Metal")

MOTH BALLS ☠ (see "Household Hazardous Waste")

MOTOR OIL & FILTERS ☠ (see "Automotive Products")

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Hungry for Music (hungryformusic.org) accepts used musical instruments. They distribute instruments to underserved children in the US & abroad. Buy reused instruments locally by searching online.



NEEDLES & SHARPS ☠

MA Sanitary Code states that it is illegal to dispose of sharps (hypodermic needles, syringes, lancets, & all other medical "sharps") as trash. Never put a container of sharps in your recycling bin. Collection pro-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

**shop smart
shop here**



Berkshire Food Co-op

34 Bridge St. Great Barrington

413-528-9697

@berkshirecoop

www.berkshire.coop

grams are available in many towns; call your Health Department or see a listing of all the sharps programs in the state, go to mass.gov and type “needle disposal” in the search bar. Sharps containers are available for purchase at pharmacies, and they often include disposal options. Several mail-in disposal programs are available; search online for “sharps mail-in programs.” Stericycle is an example of a company that picks up sharps for safe disposal from businesses that generate sharps: stericycle.com or 866-783-7422.

PAINT & PAINT-RELATED PRODUCTS

If your unwanted paint was purchased recently & it's in good condition, consider donating it for reuse. Many school or community theater groups will accept quality paint products. You may also offer useable paint via an online sharing group (e.g. [Freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org) or a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group).

- Petroleum (oil-based) paints, stains, thinners, & varnishes are considered hazardous materials, requiring proper disposal. See the Community Recycling Information table in this guide.

- New England Disposal Technologies (Westfield, MA) accepts all types of paint year-round for modest fees (nedt.org; 866-769-1621).

- Latex paint & water-based stains can be put in the trash when completely dried & hardened. Speed up the process by adding latex paint hardener (available in hardware stores) or by stirring in clean kitty litter to the consistency of thick oatmeal & allowing the mix to harden. When the contents are no longer liquid, you can put the open paint can (without the lid) in your household trash.

PALLETS (see wood under “Building & Remodeling Materials”)

PANTYHOSE

Recycled Crafts recycles pantyhose, nylon knee-highs, and tights into pet toys, rugs, placemats, and table runners. They accept clean hosiery in any condition, even those with rips and snags. Email recycledcrafts@live.com for donation information, or visit: savemyhosiery.yolasite.com. Hosiery is also accepted in textile recycling programs, see “Clothing & Textiles.”

PELLET STOVE FUEL BAGS

Plastic bags should never go into municipal recycling programs. Some retail and grocery stores will accept EMPTY pellet bags in their plastic bag recycling programs (call first). Pellet bags must be dry and completely EMPTY. Turn inside out, shake out, flatten and stack empty bags, roll up the stack and place the roll in an empty pellet bag. Ask your pellet supplier about bulk delivery (avoids bags), recycling programs, or bag take back programs.

PET FOOD BAGS, BIRD SEED BAGS, ANIMAL FEED BAGS

Plastic bags that contained pet food, animal feed, or bird seed are not recyclable in municipal recycling or in plastic bag recycling programs at retail stores. Unfortunately, neither are paper feed bags because they are lined with plastic to keep moisture out of the feed. Terracycle offers a few pet food bag recycling programs; go to terracycle.com and type “pet food bags” in the search bar. The Bag Share Project, a local group, may accept certain types of feed bags for reuse, and provides instructions on how to make bags: www.thebagshare.org



PHOTOGRAPHS

Traditional, glossy photographs are not acceptable in recycling because of the photographic chemical coatings in the paper. Old photographs are safe to throw in the trash. More modern photographs may or may not be recyclable depending on the printing process and the type of paper used. Home-printed photographs that are printed on regular paper are acceptable in recycling.

PIZZA BOXES

A 2020 study by West Rock (a major US corrugated cardboard manufacturer) found that grease on pizza boxes does NOT cause problems for recycled paper manufacturers, as previously thought. It is now OK to put the ENTIRE pizza box into recycling...



but it MUST be empty (no crusts, food, foil, plastic, or waxed paper). Link to the study: tinyurl.com/pizzaboxes2020. If you wish to compost a brown pizza box, you can shred it and add it to your compost pile, or contact your local compost service for more information.

PLASTICS

Many people assume that all plastic items are accepted in recycling, but recycling is demand-based; only those plastics that can be made cost-effectively into new products are on the “yes” list. Please note that plastic containers from food, beverage, soap and personal care products are the ONLY type of plastic suitable for your household recycling bin. All other forms of plastic must go in the trash or, when available, to a separate special recycling program. See the box “Keep These Plastics out of the Recycling Bin” for additional details.

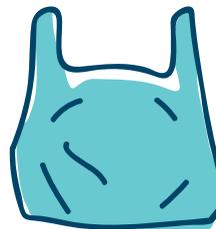
Containers from food, beverages, soap and personal products

The following items are welcome in your household recycling bin: plastic containers from food, beverage, soap or personal care products in the form of bottles, jars, jugs, and tubs. Plastic bottle caps & plastic tub lids are recyclable, if attached to the container (not loose). Plastic items that are smaller than a credit card or larger than 2.5 gallons are not acceptable because they cannot be sorted effectively. Bottle pumps should go in the trash. Please note that black plastics are not accepted because they can't be sorted with optical sorting technology.

Other items on the recycling “yes” list are clear plastic cups, clear plastic clamshells, and clear plastic egg cartons. Clear cups should ideally be rinsed before recycling; put lids and straws in the trash. If a clear cup is labeled compostable, do not put it in a recycling bin. Ask your hauler or visit springfieldmrf.org for details and graphics about household container recycling.

BAGS & WRAP (DO NOT PLACE IN HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING BIN)

Plastic bags, plastic films, and plastic wrap (“soft plastics”) create safety hazards, machinery malfunctions, and environmental problems at recycling facilities. Some



of these materials are accepted in retail and grocery store collection programs (e.g. Big Y, Stop & Shop, Target, Walmart, Staples). In general, clean and dry plastic bags and wraps are recyclable if they are: 1.) clear or translucent; 2.) moderately stretchy; 3.) marked #2 or #4; and 4.) empty and free of food residue. Two important exceptions are household food or “cling” wrap, which must be placed in the trash, and bags labeled “Compostable,” which can be placed in commercial or municipal composting or trash. See the accompanying table, “Plastic Bag Recycling” or visit plasticmakers.org for additional details.

BULKY, RIGID PLASTIC OBJECTS (DO NOT PLACE IN HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING BIN)

Many rigid plastic items are reusable until broken or damaged; offer them for free on an online sharing group (e.g. [Freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org) or a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group).

Some communities offer specialized bulky rigid plastic (BRP) collection programs. Ask your community representative (see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide) about opportunities near you. BRP collections are highly selective and accept only clean, molded, rigid plastic pails, bins, crates, baskets, totes, barrels, wheeled trash totes (metal and wheels removed), and plastic lawn furniture.



FOAM (DO NOT PLACE IN HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING BIN)

The recycling market for rigid foam material (aka Styrofoam™ or expanded polystyrene/EPS) is growing, but only certain blocky foams are accepted for special recycling programs. Rigid foam products may be divided into the general categories of shipping peanuts, blocky packing material, and food-related serve ware (cups, plates, trays):

- Foam shipping peanuts: Foam peanuts are not recyclable, but they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

are highly reusable. Some local retail shipping outlets accept clean & dry peanuts (call first; search for a store near you at theupsstore.com). Or offer them for local reuse via an online sharing group such as Freecycle.org or a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group.

- Large, rigid foam blocks and sheets: Clean and dry pieces of foam packing materials and coolers are only recyclable through a separate collection. Some communities collect this foam at municipal transfer stations or at special collection events and transport it to a foam recycling facility.

- Foam cups, plates, and trays: Even if they have a recycling symbol, food-related Styrofoam™ materials are not currently accepted at any recycling facilities. Place in trash.

PLASTIC POUCHES

Flexible plastic pouches that contained applesauce, fruit, kids drinks, yogurt, baby food, and health/beauty products, are NOT recyclable in municipal recycling programs. Terracycle has several different mail-in recycling programs for pouches and caps; go to terracycle.com and type “pouches” in the search bar. Please remove all residual food and liquid.



PRESSURE-TREATED LUMBER (see “Building & Remodeling Materials”)

PROPANE TANKS

Most propane tanks can be refilled; many businesses that sell propane will accept tanks for reuse under specific conditions. Do not put tanks in household recycling, trash, or scrap metal dumpsters. Tanks are recyclable in special, separate programs at transfer stations or recycling centers. Do not puncture. Close the valves on barbecue grill size tanks. Some recyclers also accept small camping type tanks. Local municipal recycling info is found in the Community Recycling Information table in this guide; find more options at earth911.com.



PYREX™, CERAMIC AND PORCELAIN PRODUCTS

Offer for reuse. Not accepted in recy-

cling; dispose of in the trash (wrap up broken pieces). Colorful ceramic/porcelain items (even broken ones) are sometimes used by local arts centers or craftspeople, so a phone call or a post to an online sharing group (e.g. Freecycle.org or a local “Buy Nothing” Facebook group) may help extend their usefulness.



SCRAP METAL

Many metal items (like bicycles or BBQ grills) can be repaired, sold or donated to extend their useful life. Because of the usefulness and value of metal, state regulations prohibit throwing aluminum, steel, iron, lead, stainless steel, copper, brass, or bronze scrap in the trash. Some metal items require special handling due to toxic or pressurized materials and should not be put directly into scrap metal dumpsters: this includes lead acid batteries, propane tanks, helium tanks, fluorescent light ballasts, air conditioners, refrigerators, and automotive parts. Many municipal transfer stations and recycling centers have scrap metal recycling dumpsters; see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide. Some scrap metal dealers will pay for metal items. Search online under “metal recycling” for the scrap yard nearest you and its requirements. Suitable scrap items should be mostly metal by weight; if possible, plastic parts should be removed.

SHOES

Shoes, along with other textiles, are now a banned waste item in MA trash (as of November 2022). Bring CLEAN & DRY textiles & shoes to drop-off boxes serviced by organizations such as the Salvation Army (easternusa.salvationarmy.org), and donation centers such as Goodwill Industries (goodwill.org). Many municipal transfer stations host textile drop boxes and refer to the list of drop-off locations under Clothing & Textiles above. DO include clean & dry shoes that are well worn or with missing mates.

In addition, several organizations, such as One World Running (oneworldrunning.com), specialize in shoe reuse. Rerun Shoes is a



Massachusetts based shoe donation organization, visit rerunshoes.com to learn more. Soles4souls donation boxes and program info can be found at soles4souls.org.

SHREDDED PAPER

Shredded paper is no longer accepted in household/municipal recycling programs. To have confidential documents shredded and recycled, bring them to area businesses (e.g. copy shops, office supply, and shipping stores). Local banks often sponsor free shredding events in the spring and fall. The material that is shredded in these programs is delivered directly to paper mills, which avoids the scattering and contamination that ensues at a household recycling facility. Otherwise, dispose of shredded paper as trash. Paper shreds that are free of plastic and receipts can go in municipal compost programs, where allowed.

SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

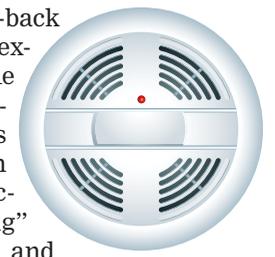
Remove all non-alkaline batteries and dispose of them appropriately (see “Batteries”). Most household smoke detectors contain a small amount of a radioactive element, Americium-241. The quantity in each unit is considered harmless, but its presence is worrisome enough that retailer and manufac-

turer take-back programs exist. Google the manufacturer’s name with “smoke detector recycling” for program and shipping details. Curie Environmental Services offers a fee-based, mail-in smoke alarm recycling program, see curieservices.com. Some communities allow smoke detectors to be thrown away in the bulky waste container at a recycling/transfer station, see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide.

Carbon monoxide detectors are not considered hazardous and can be safely disposed of in the trash after removing (and recycling) all non-alkaline batteries.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Sporting equipment exchange/donation options are found locally via charitable organizations such as Goodwill, schools, Scout troops, or the Lion’s Club. Instant Replay in Pittsfield is an example of a sports equipment consignment store. Consider sharing via online groups (e.g. Freecycle.org or a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group).



CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Did You Know?

Nearly 50% of Massachusetts residents mistakenly believe plastic bags can go in the recycling bin.



STYROFOAM™ (see “*Plastics: Foam*”)

TELEVISIONS (see “*Electronics*”)

TENNIS BALLS



Check with your local animal shelter or elementary school to see if they accept tennis ball donations (schools use them on chair/desk feet). A mail-in recycling program is available at tennisballrecycling.com.

TEXTILES (see “*Clothing & Textiles*”)

THERMOMETERS & THERMOSTATS & (see “*Mercury & Mercury-containing Products*”)



TOOTHPASTE TUBES, TOOTHBRUSHES

These items are not accepted in household recycling. Terracycle runs mail-in recycling programs for oral care items (terracycle.com). Preserve® brand toothbrushes can be mailed for recycling (preserve.eco).

TROPHIES

Contact your local trophy shop to see if they can reuse your old trophies. A Wisconsin-based trophy organization offers a fee-based, mail-in reuse program; go to awardsmall.com and search for “recycling.” A Massachusetts company accepts metal sports or academic medals/medallions for recycling; see sportsmedalrecycling.com.

TYVEK™ ENVELOPES

Tyvek™ envelopes (large, white envelopes that won't rip, often from express shipments) are not accepted in municipal/household recycling, or in the plastic bag recycling programs at grocery and retail stores.

VASES

Glass vases are not recyclable. Donate to a local garden club, swap shop, Goodwill, or local florist(s) for reuse (call first).

VEGETABLE OIL (see “*Cooking Oil*”)



VEHICLES

Old vehicles, even inoperable ones, are valued for spare parts and metal. Consider donating them to a charitable organization (might be tax deductible). Contact your favorite charity or search online for “auto (or vehicle/truck/motorcycle/boat) donation.” Alternatively, search the Internet under “Auto Wreckers & Salvage.”

WOOD (see “*Building & Remodeling Materials*”)

X-RAY FILM

There are no special disposal requirements, but x-rays do contain a small amount of silver. Some hospital radiology departments will accept them for recycling.

YARD WASTE (*Leaves, grass, brush, Christmas trees*)

Throwing away leaf & yard waste as trash is prohibited by state waste bans. Some communities collect yard waste seasonally for wood chip production or composting; for local information, see the Community Recycling Information table in this guide. Tommy's Compost, and some landscaping services, offer leaf removal services. For information on Christmas Trees, refer to section “Christmas Trees”. Meadow Farm in Lee (413-243-4111) and Holiday Brook Farm accept yard waste - call in advance for information about hours and what is accepted. Visit mass.gov/composting-organics to learn about composting yard waste in your backyard.

YOGA MATS

Yoga mats are not recyclable but can be repurposed. Search online

for “yoga mat reuse,” or offer via an online sharing group (e.g. Freecycle.org or a “Buy Nothing” Facebook group).

Looking for something that is not on this list? Here are local resources with more information:

Springfield MRF's “What's Recyclable” page: springfieldmrf.org/

whats-recyclable-at-the-mrf
MassDEP's Recycle Smart Recyclopedia: recyclesmartma.org

Please help us to improve this guide for the next edition! If you encounter errors or have suggestions for changes or additions, contact us at BerkshireRRR@gmail.com. Thank you!



Recycle Smart
RecycleSmartMA.org

Why Can't We Recycle Everything?

State Recycling Experts Answer Some Tough Questions

In our humble opinion, this was the best question the RecycleSmart MA team received at a live webinar for the general public called Ask Me Anything About Recycling In Massachusetts. Why do we like this question so much? First, it gives us a chance to explain some of what happens “behind the recycling curtain.” And if you understand more about the next stop for your recycling after it leaves the curb or your local transfer station, the recycling rules just might make a little more sense. Let’s explore this and the other top questions that were put to our expert panel by an audience of inquiring recyclers.

Why can't we recycle everything?

Here’s the honest truth – our recycling systems (aka Materials Recovery Facilities) – which are built to last 10 to 20 years and cost millions in engineering and equipment – simply can’t adapt quickly enough to handle the ever-changing stream of consumer packaging and products. Then there’s stuff that’s just plain dangerous, like rechargeable batteries from phones which hold heat and a charge and cause fires at recycling facilities. Finally, if the material doesn’t have a viable market – meaning no one wants to use it to make a new product – it’s not recyclable.

In Massachusetts, materials must meet three criteria to be recycled in your home recycling bin:

1. The material should not harm the workers or equipment.
2. The recycling equipment must be designed to sort and process the material.
3. There must be a consistent market (a buyer) for the material.

What can you do in the meantime? Let’s recycle everything that we can! Avoid the temptation to “wish cycle” by following the Smart Recycling Guide. And make your voice heard by contacting your favorite brands to tell them you want recyclable packaging only!

Does the number on plastics matter?

The Short Answer: No.

First off – we agree, plastics are complicated. The ubiquitous number inside a recycling symbol on plastic items is arguably the single greatest



source of confusion for the recycling public. The number, known as the Resin Identification Code, indicates the type of plastic resin the item in question is made of. And that number appears on thousands of items – from blister packs to plastic storage bins to children’s toys and automotive parts – that CAN’T be recycled at most recycling facilities. The resin code is so misleading that California just passed a Truth in Advertising Law that prohibits the recycling symbol on anything deemed not recyclable (i.e. it can’t be conveniently collected and made into new stuff).

So How Do I Know What Plastic Is Recyclable? The best rule of thumb is to forget about the numbers. Instead, focus on the shape: if it’s a bottle, jug, jar or tub, put it in the recycling bin. What’s pictured in the Smart Recycling Guide are examples of plastic containers you can recycle in Massachusetts. Of course, it wouldn’t be complicated if there weren’t exceptions (e.g., clear plastic cups, plastic egg cartons, and these specific take-out containers are all recyclable). These exceptions are spelled out in the Recyclopeda. So, if you have something you are unsure about, you know what to do. And if it’s not in the Recyclopeda, you can assume it’s NOT recyclable.

How wet is too wet and while you’re at it, what about sticky notes?

Most questions we received about paper products were about moisture and size. Here’s the deal – both issues can be problematic. When it comes to size, think bigger than a credit card (this means no shredded paper). If you’ve got a small post-it note, stick it to a bigger piece of paper. As for moisture, you really want to keep your paper dry but a few drops of water won’t hurt. Leaving your recycling uncovered in a rain or snowstorm will. A jar half full of spaghetti sauce that breaks and splatters all over the paper is also a problem, so remember to empty and rinse jars to keep your paper ready for recycling.

Which plastic bags can I recycle and where?

So. Many. Questions. About Bags. But they were all good! Here are a few:

- Which type of bag is okay in the household recycling bin (answer: none)
- What stuff is good to take back to the grocery store collection bin? (answer: more than you think – see the list at plastic film recycling.org)
- How about bubble wrap? (answer: put it with plastic bags and take to grocery/retail drop-off)

- What about putting recyclables into those blue tinted plastic bags that are marketed for that purpose? (answer, unless you live in the North End, South End or Beacon Hill in Boston, your bagged recyclables will end up in the trash)

The takeaway: NO plastic bags or plastic wrap in the household recycling bin (no matter the type, number, color, etc.). They should be taken back to grocery stores or retail locations that accept them. Bags, plastic film, and stuff in bags are the #1 contaminant at the recycling facility. They get caught in machinery and force the MRFs to stop operations to cut them off the equipment – which puts workers at risk of injury.

Till we meet again

We know the rules can get complicated, but don’t give up! Your smart recycling matters and the more you recycle, the fewer natural resources we consume. Recycling also reduces our dependency on fossil fuels, because it requires less energy to produce goods from recycled materials than from virgin resources.

What is RecycleSmartMA?

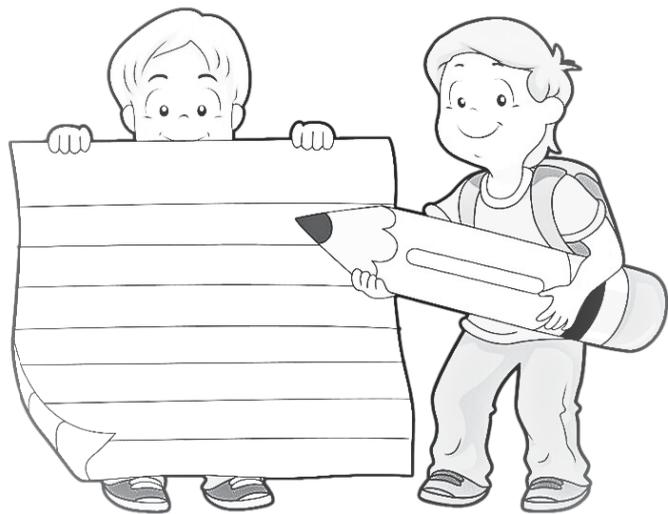
It’s an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to help educate Bay State residents about what can and cannot go into the recycling bin. The RecycleSmartMA website (recyclesmartma.org) features a universal Smart Recycling Guide in eight languages, with pictures of the YES and NO items. Want to drill down further? Search the online Recyclopeda for answers to more than 500 items. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. OR subscribe to the newsletter, which takes a deep dive into current recycling topics every other month. Test your recycling knowledge with the RecycleSmart AM Quizzes and check out the Recycling Road Map to see where your recyclables go after they leave the curb or your local transfer station. It’s all at recyclesmartma.org.

This article is an adaptation of a RecycleSmartMA blog post. Read the full post online at recyclesmartma.org

Fun ways to

REDUCE

waste



Make a List

.....
Make a list before going to the grocery store or your favorite retail shop!



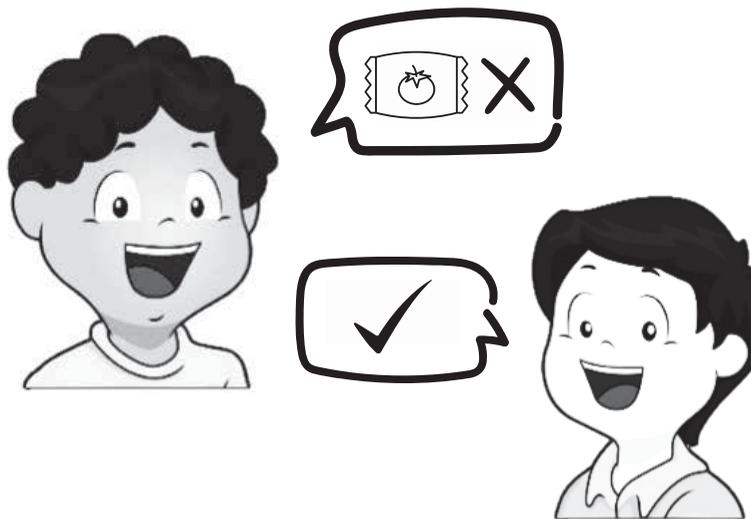
Get Thrifty

.....
Thrift and second-hand items have a lot of character and giving them a second chance can be so fun!



Rethink Common Choices

.....
You may be surprised to learn what you can live without.



Inspire Others

.....
Inspire friends to give gifts without new gift wrap, or let a restaurant you don't need sauce packets.

Color Me!

COMMUNITY RECYCLING INFORMATION

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Municipal Transfer Stations and other drop-off locations may only be open to residents of that community; some require annual permits and “Pay As You Throw” trash bags. Fees may apply for some items. For more information, call your town’s contact number below. For definitions of abbreviations, see glossary below. For more information and materials listed below, see the “What Do I Do With ... ?” disposal listing in this guide.

Municipality	Contact	Drop Off Address (municipal site)	Hours of Operation	Household Recycling	Household Hazardous Waste Event	Book Bin	Bulky Waste	Food Waste Diversion	Mat-tresses	Mercury (Fluorescent) Lightbulbs	Motor Oil	Propane Tanks	Scrap metal	Swap Shop	Textile Bin	Tires	TVs/ Electronics	Yard Waste
ADAMS	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	242 East Rd	W 10 - 2, Sat 7:30 - 3	Dropoff	NBSWMD	C	X		S	X	S	X	X		X	X	X	X
ALFORD	Highway Dept 413-528-6327	5 Alford Center Rd	T 7 - 12, Sat 8 - 12	Dropoff	Tri-Town		X		B						X			
BECKET	Town Hall (413) 623-8934, ext 116	228 Washington St	T & Sat 9 - 5	Dropoff	Tri-Town		X		X	X			X		X	X		
CHESHIRE	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	6 Main St	W & F 12 - 5, Sat 8 - 5	Dropoff	NBSWMD		X		S	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
CLARKSBURG	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	None	N/A	None	NBSWMD		X		S	X	X	X	X			X	X	
DALTON	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	1 Bridle Rd	T & W 2 - 6, F & Sat 8 - 4	Dropoff	NBSWMD		X		X		E		X		X	S	E, S	X
EGREMONT	Health Dept 413-528-0453	171 Egremont Plain Rd	Sun 10 - 4, T/Th/Sat 8 - 1	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X	X	B+	X	E		X	X	X		X	X
FLORIDA	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	379 Mohawk Trail	W 9 - 5, Sat 7 - 3	Drop off	NBSWMD	X	X		S	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
GREAT BARRINGTON	Public Works Dept 413-528-0867	601 Stockbridge Rd	F 8 - 3, Sat 7 - 3, Sun 10 - 3	Dropoff	Tri-Town		X		X		X		X			X	X	
HANCOCK	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	RT 42, mile marker 6.5	Sat 12 - 2, M thru F 6-7pm	Dropoff	NBSWMD		X		S	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
HINSDALE	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	106 Plunkett Reservoir Rd	T & Th 2 - 6, Sat 9 - 3, Sun 9 - 2	Dropoff	NBSWMD	X	X		S	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LANESBOROUGH	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	10 Maple Court	Sat 8 - 12	Drop off	NBSWMD	X	E		S	X	S	X	X		X	S	S	
LEE	Greener Gateway Comm lee.ma.us	None	N/A	None	Tri-Town			C	C		E				X			C
LENOX	DPW 413-637-5500, ext 1211	None	N/A	None	Tri-Town						E							
MONROE	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	Call	Call	Curbside	NBSWMD	X	S		S	S	S	S	X		X	S	S	
MONTEREY	Public Works 413-528-3523	40 Gould Rd	W & Sat 8 - 1, Sun 10 - 4:30	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	
MOUNT WASHINGTON	Town Hall 413-528-2730	Cross Rd	W 7 - 12, Sat 11 - 5, Sun 12 - 5	Dropoff	Tri-Town		E			C	E		E					
NEW ASHFORD	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	4 Ingrahm Rd	Sat 7 - 10	Drop off	NBSWMD	X	S		S	S	E	X	X		X	S	E	
NEW MARLBOROUGH	Transfer Station 413-229-2116	616 South Sandisfield Rd	W & Sun 9 - 1, Sat 9 - 3	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X	X		X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	
NORTH ADAMS	Transfer Station 413-662-3000 ext. 3047	151 East St	T thru Sat 7 - 2	Dropoff	None		X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X
OTIS	Transfer Station 413-269-0100 ext. 114	536 West Center Rd	M & Sat 7 - 3, Th 10 - 6, Sun 9 - 4	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X		X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PERU	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	9 East Main Rd	Sat 8 - 4:30, May-Sept: W 4:30 - 6:30	Dropoff	NBSWMD		X		S	X	X	X	X	X	X	S	X	
PITTSFIELD	Public Utilities 413-499-9330	None	N/A	Curbside	October				B		E				C			
RICHMOND	Highway Dept Highway@richmondma.org	None	N/A	Curbside	Tri-Town		E				E				C			
SANDISFIELD	Public Works 413-258-4042	144 Sandisfield Rd	W 2 - 5, Sat 9 - 3, Sun 12 - 6	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X		X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	
SAVOY	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	Chapel Rd	W 4:30 - 8:30, Sat 8 - 1	Dropoff	NBSWMD	X	S		S	X	E	X	X	X	X	S	X	X
SHEFFIELD	sheffieldma.gov/recycling-and-solid-waste	304 Barnum St	T & F 1 - 4, Sat 8 - 4, Sun 8:30 - 2	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X	X	X	X	E		X	X	X		X	
STOCKBRIDGE	Transfer Station 413-717-8909	1 W. Stockbridge Rd	M-F 7:30-3:30, Sat 7:30-2:30, May-Oct: Sun 12-3	Dropoff	Tri-Town					X	E	C	X	X	X	X	X	
TYRINGHAM	(413) 243-1749 X108	27 Monterey Rd	W 12 - 4, Sat & Sun 8 - 12	Dropoff	Tri-Town					X	E		X		X		X	C
WASHINGTON	Town Hall 413-623-8878	443 S. Washington State Rd.	Sat 8 - 4, W 5 - 8pm	Dropoff	Tri-Town	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
WEST STOCKBRIDGE	Transfer Station 413-232-0307	Day Farm Rd	T & TH 10-6, Sat 8-6	Dropoff	Tri-Town		X				E		X	X		X		X
WILLIAMSTOWN	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	671 Simonds Rd	T thru F 7:30 - 3:30, Sat 7 - 3	Dropoff	NBSWMD	X	X	X	S	X	X	X	X		X	S	X	X
WINDSOR	NBSWMD 413-743-8208	1890 Route 9	W 6 - 7:45 pm, Sat 8 - 12:45	Dropoff	NBSWMD	X	X		S	X	E, S	S	X	X	X	X	S	

Key/Glossary of Terms:

- NBSWMD** Residents may participate in collection events organized by the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District (contact the District for details)
- Tri-Town** Municipality has arranged for residents to participate in the Tri-Town Health Department’s hazardous waste collection events (held twice annually)
- B** Municipality has arranged for curbside mattress collection
- B+** Municipality has arranged for curbside mattress collection AND accepts mattresses at the transfer station
- C** Contact your municipality or District (via website, email, or phone) for details
- E** Safe disposal available for residents via annual collection event(s) (contact municipality for details)
- S** Disposal services have been arranged for residents at a neighboring facility (shared--contact municipality for details)

Jokes That Stink

By Guy, the Tommy's Compost Bucket



EASY.
COOL.
Convenient.

Tommy's offers the best food waste pickup services for homes and businesses throughout the Berkshires. It has never been easier to do the 'right thing' for our planet!



Residential Service Area

-  **Current Service Area**
-  **Coming Soon**



Sign Up Here



TOMMY'S
COMPOST SERVICE

(413) - 684 - 8144 · Hello@TommysCompost.com · TommysCompost.com

Instagram



These great recycling resources make diverting useful discards easier

RECYCLE in WESTERN MASS



Yes please recycle these papers & containers:

Paper: envelopes with windows, magazines, newspapers, inserts, junk mail, post-it notes, business cards, catalogs, white and colored paper, corrugated cardboard, paperboard (for example, cereal boxes), empty pizza boxes (no food or liners), paperback books, construction paper, gift wrap/bags/tissue paper and greeting cards (no metallic inks, foil, wire, glitter, batteries)

Empty and clean all containers. Replace lids and caps.

Aluminum: cans, foil, pie pans

Steel: (tin) cans, beverage and pet food cans

Cartons: milk, juice, soup, soy milk and drink boxes

Glass: food, beverage bottles and jars

Plastics: (2.5 gallons or less) food containers—margarine, yogurt, cooking oil, condiments, peanut butter; beverage bottles and jugs—soda, water, juice, milk; clear plastic clamshells, clear plastic egg cartons, clear plastic cups; personal care bottles—shampoo, soap, conditioner; detergent bottles

No Plastic bags, color or opaque plastic cups, automotive fluid bottles, black plastic, plastics over 2.5 gallons, paper frozen food packaging, Styrofoam™, textiles, batteries

*For a complete YES & NO list of what can be recycled, visit www.springfieldmrf.org.

Recycling guides help you make the right choices



RECICLAJE en Western Mass



Sí Favor de reciclar los siguientes papeles y envases:

Papel: sobres con ventanas, revistas, periódicos, folletos publicitarios, notas autoadhesivas, tarjetas de presentación, catálogos, papel blanco y coloreado, cartón ondulado, cajas de cartón (ej. cajas de cereal)

Favor de vaciar y limpiar todos los envases y volver a poner las tapas en los recipientes.

Aluminio: Latas, papel de aluminio, moldes de aluminio

Aceros: Latas de alimentos y bebidas

Cartones: de leche, jugo, sopa, leche de soja y otras bebidas

Vidrio: frascos y botellas de alimentos y bebidas

Plástico: (envases de 2.5 galones o menos) contenedores de alimentos: mantequilla, yogur, aceite de cocina, condimentos, mantequilla de maní, botellas y jarras de bebidas: refresco, agua, jugo, leche; botellas de detergente; vasos y contenedores de plástico transparentes, cartones de huevos transparentes; envases de jabón, champú, y acondicionador

No Bolsas de plástico, vasos de plástico opacos o de colores, botellas de anticongelante o aceite de motor, envases de plástico negro, envases de papel de alimentos congelados, uncel, ropa, pilas

*Para saber más sobre reciclar visite nuestra página www.springfieldmrf.org.

Download these guides from Springfieldmrf.org/whats-recyclable-at-the-mrf. Similar guides in eight languages can be found at RecycleSmartMA.org

5 great short videos tell the story.



Recycling basics



Container recycling



Paper recycling



Bin No-nos



Videos can also be accessed at Springfieldmrf.org



Trash or recycling bin?
A quiz will help you sort it out.

Find quizzes & more at RecycleSmartMA.org (MassDEP's outreach & educational initiative)



Take a quiz!



The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). We process household containers and paper.



Owned by the State of Massachusetts, the MRF sorts, bales, and markets household recyclables from 65 western Massachusetts communities.

For additional information visit SpringfieldMRF.org