



# MassDEP Mattress and Textile Waste Bans Communications Toolkit

## Background

The [\*Massachusetts 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan: Working Together Toward Zero Waste\*](#) establishes goals to reduce trash disposal 30 percent statewide by 2030 and 90 percent by 2050. To help achieve these goals, MassDEP is expanding its current waste disposal bans to include **mattresses and textiles**. Beginning November 1, 2022, landfills, transfer stations and waste-to-energy facilities across the Commonwealth will no longer accept these items for disposal.



Instead, mattresses must be recycled or reused, and textiles must be donated for reuse or other secondary uses. Many municipalities have already started programs to keep mattresses and textiles out of the trash. Now's the time to spread the word to Bay State residents about the new rules.



## Tips for Talking About the New Rules

When sharing information about the mattress and textile waste disposal bans, keep the following in mind:

- ☑ **Keep the message simple.** Most Massachusetts residents aren't familiar with the term "waste ban," and MassDEP does not inspect household trash for "waste ban items." We suggest using this phrasing instead: "New state rules require mattresses and textiles be kept out of the trash so they can be recycled or donated for reuse."
- ☑ **Focus on the benefits** of keeping mattresses and textiles out of the trash, such as:
  - Massachusetts has a statewide plan to reduce waste 30 percent by 2030. You can help us reach that goal by keeping mattresses and textiles out of the trash.
  - Mattresses and box springs are bulky and hard to handle in the trash. Separating them for recycling is better for the planet and reduces the need for additional landfills and waste-to-energy facilities.

- Massachusetts residents get rid of almost 300,000 mattresses and box springs every year. That's a real waste, as 85 percent of what's in a mattress can be recycled.
- Bay State residents and businesses throw away nearly 230,000 tons of textiles every year. That's a real waste, as about 95 percent of this material can be reused or repurposed. Give textiles a second life by donating them for reuse and repurposing.
- Recycling mattresses and recovering textiles helps support in-state, non-profit organizations and businesses and creates jobs here in Massachusetts.

☑ **“Textiles” includes** clothes, shoes, linens, towels, curtains, and cloth accessories. When in doubt, check [the Recyclopedia](#).

- Textiles should never go in your household recycling bin. They also do not belong in the trash, unless they are wet, moldy, or contaminated.
- Textiles aren't actually “recycled” in the way cans, bottles, and paper are. They must be separated and handled by organizations that know how to sort them for three types of use: resale as second-hand clothing; cutting into shop rags; and shredding into fiber for insulation, carpet padding, and soundproofing.

☑ **Drop off textiles at designated collection bins or donate them to your favorite charity or thrift store.** Donation bins accept the widest range of items; your local thrift store may be more restrictive in what they want. Some organizations will even pick up from your home. To donate your textiles directly to charitable organizations, check out their websites for in-store drop-off opportunities or collection bin locations.

**\*Pro Tip:** Provide information (a script) about your new collection process to whoever answers phone calls from the public at your town/city hall and Department of Public Works.

## Tips for Adding Information to Your Website

If there's one takeaway from this toolkit, it should be that communication and transparency are very important when it comes to program changes. **The number one thing you can/should do is make this information readily available on your website as soon as possible.**

- ☑ **Post instructions for residents on what to do with an unwanted mattress.** If you do not have a collection program, this might be as simple as: “Per a new state rule, as of November 1, 2022, mattresses must be recycled. Our city/town will no longer be accepting mattresses with the trash. Please find a junk hauler to take your mattress or consider donating or gifting mattresses in good condition.”
- ☑ **Post information on textile recovery on your website.** If you have a collection program, list locations/instructions. If you do not, remind residents that they do not go in the trash or recycling and provide a link to [Beyond the Bin](#).
- ☑ The following websites are examples of how to promote your new programs with clear language and imagery.

- Town of Agawam [textile page](#)
- City of Boston [textile page](#)
- City of Cambridge [mattress page](#) and [textile page](#)
- Town of Concord [mattress page](#)
- South Shore Recycling Cooperative (SSRC) [textile page](#)

## Social Media Text and Images

To get you started, we've provided some sample social media posts. Some of our suggested text below includes a link to a Recycle Smart newsletter with more information/context around the waste bans, but you can also add a link to your municipal website for specific information on mattress and textile recycling in your community.

**Note:** The images are not editable, but the caption/text for your post is. Remember, the images can be used in newsletters, mailers, and other printable outreach materials, too.





### Social media posting instructions:

1. Copy and paste the post text as a new post on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
2. Modify the text with specific links to your municipal website, etc.
3. Tag us @recyclesmartma
4. Download and save the relevant image. Graphics are located on MassDEP's box.com site, in the "[Textile and Mattress Graphics](#)" folder.
5. Upload the image to FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
6. Post away!

### Social Post About Mattresses

Text
Don't snooze on recycling that old mattress! Most mattress parts are recyclable once disassembled—and as part of MA's plan to reduce waste 30% by 2030, [insert city/town name] no longer accepts mattresses for trash disposal. Learn more: <a href="#">[insert hyperlink to municipality's mattress information]</a>
Buying a new mattress and wondering what to do with your old one? Some retailers will collect old mattresses for recycling when delivering a new one, so don't forget to ask! For more information about [insert city/town name] mattress disposal rules, see our website <a href="#">[insert hyperlink to municipality's mattress information]</a> .
Moving soon? If your mattress isn't coming with you, make sure to check our website <a href="#">[insert hyperlink to municipality's mattress information]</a> for recycling options! Mattresses take up lots of space in landfills and can get caught in incinerator processing equipment. Learn more: <a href="https://bit.ly/3QNukMB">https://bit.ly/3QNukMB</a>

## Images

<p><b>WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS?</b></p>  <p><b>Mattresses are no longer accepted for trash disposal.</b> <i>See caption for details.</i></p> 	<p><b>WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS?</b></p>  <p><b>Mattresses are no longer accepted for trash disposal.</b> <i>See caption for details.</i></p> 
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## Social Posts about Textiles

### Text

Noticing new textile collection bins around? Clothes, shoes, linens, and other textiles never belong in your home recycling bin, but you can donate them to give them a second life 🧥👟👖! Help keep these items out of the trash. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3z05umD> (OR, Find locations here: [\[insert link to your municipality's textile page\].](#))

95% of textiles thrown away in MA could be reused or repurposed! Take old clothes, shoes, bedding, etc., to textile collection bins. Good-condition items are sold at secondhand shops, while worn/torn textiles are turned into rags, insulation, and more: <https://bit.ly/3QNukMB>

## Images

<p><b>DO NOT PUT IN RECYCLING OR TRASH</b></p>  <p><b>Take textiles to a drop-off location.</b> <i>See caption for details.</i></p> 	<p><b>DO NOT PUT IN RECYCLING OR TRASH</b></p>  <p><b>Take textiles to a drop-off location.</b> <i>See caption for details.</i></p> 
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The complete Waste Bans Communication Toolkit is located on box.com:

<https://mdep.box.com/s/8zrcc5tp2n1y3915ox46vrhp0zow41og>

## Sample Written Communication

The following is meant to provide SAMPLE language for an email or other written communication. It is not meant to be copy/pasted as is. Please review, customize to your program's needs, and use as much or as little as you need.

### ☒ Option 1 – Language to use if you want to keep your written communication short.

Things are changing in Massachusetts! As of November 1, 2022, mattresses and textiles will no longer be allowed in the trash. New state rules require mattresses and textiles be kept out of the trash so they can be recycled or donated for reuse. In order to comply, [insert muni name] will be changing/has changed the way we collect mattresses and textiles. Please see our website for instructions [insert link to webpage].

To help you understand these changes and the reasons behind them, the MassDEP has written a newsletter focusing on the new Waste Bans and why they are important. You can read the newsletter in its entirety here: [Waste Bans 101: Less Trash for a Cleaner Mass...achusetts](#).

### ☒ Option 2 – Language to use if you want to customize your written communication and provide more background information.

Things are changing in Massachusetts! As of November 1, 2022, mattresses and textiles will no longer be allowed in the trash. New state rules require mattresses and textiles be kept out of the trash so they can be recycled or donated for reuse. In order to comply, [insert Municipality name] will be changing/has changed the way we collect mattresses and textiles. Please see our website for instructions [insert link to webpage].

#### Background information

Why the change? The 2020 Solid Waste Master Plan has set a goal to reduce trash 30% by 2030 (from 5.7 million tons in 2018 to 4 million tons in 2030), and 90% by 2050. One of the strategies the State uses to achieve that goal is to exclude certain materials from the trash. This strategy is known as the "Waste Bans."

#### What is a waste ban?

Massachusetts was one of the first states to implement a waste ban on easy-to-recycle and/or toxic materials. Things that are included in the list of materials banned from the trash are what the State considers too good or too bad for the trash. The waste bans were created to:

1. Promote reuse, waste reduction, and recycling by keeping good stuff out of the trash
2. Protect human health and the environment by keeping toxic stuff out of the trash

3. Prolong the life of our landfills and incinerators while mitigating their environmental impacts
4. Support local recycling and composting businesses by ensuring a reliable supply of materials

...all good things! The first MA waste ban went into effect on December 31, 1990, and prohibited lead acid batteries from landfill and incineration. Since then, MA has added several more items to the list.

### **Why Mattresses?**

MA residents throw out 300,000 mattresses each year. That's a lot of potential material that could be used to make new products. In fact, over 75% of mattress and box spring components can be easily disassembled and recycled.

Mattresses also take up a lot of space! Separating them for recycling is better for the planet and reduces the need for additional landfills and municipal waste combustion facilities.

☒ **Language to use if your municipality has a collection/recycling program for mattresses.**

### **What to do with your old mattress**

If you're not sure what to do with your old mattress, there are a few options to consider.

- You can donate mattresses in good condition (we recommend a quick google search to find donation sites).
- You can give mattresses away via a local gifting group like Buy Nothing or Freecycle.
- If you are buying new, you can check with the retailer to see if they will recycle your old one.
- And of course, you can recycle it by *[insert specific instructions for your Municipality, i.e., link to website, phone number to call, etc.]*

☒ **Language to use if your municipality does NOT have a collection/recycling program for mattresses.**

### **What to do with your old mattress**

If you're not sure what to do with your old mattress, there are a few options to consider.

- You can donate mattresses in good condition (we recommend a quick google search to find donation sites).
- You can give mattresses away via a local gifting group like Buy Nothing or Freecycle.
- If you are buying new, you can check with the retailer to see if they will recycle your old one.
- You can call a local junk hauler to take it away.

## Textile Recovery

About 230,000 TONS of textiles are disposed of annually in Massachusetts – 95% of which could have been reused, resold, or remade into something new instead. Textiles are anything from clothing (shirts, sweaters, pants) to footwear (sneakers, sandals, cleats) to accessories (bags, belts, hats) to linens (sheets, towels, and more).

There are many paths your used textiles can take:

- Donated textiles can be given or resold to people who need them here in the US and abroad.
- Textiles in poor condition can become industrial wiping cloths, aka "shop rags".
- Anything that cannot be resold can be remanufactured into insulation used by a variety of industries (e.g., automotive, home furnishings, and carpet padding).

Textiles should **never** go in your household recycling bin. They also do not belong in the trash, unless they are wet, moldy, or contaminated.

**Drop off textiles at designated collection bins or donate them to your favorite charity or thrift store.** Donation bins accept the widest range of items; your local thrift store may be more restrictive in what they want. Some organizations will even pick up from your home. Go to [Beyond the Bin](#) for more information.

To donate your textiles directly to charitable organizations, check out their websites for in-store drop-off opportunities or collection bin locations.

☒ **Additional language to include if your municipality has a textile collection program:**

For local drop-off locations, check out our textile recycling webpage [[insert link to textile webpage](#)]