

## With clothing, textiles banned from trash, waste district outlines recycling methods

As of Nov. 1, clothing and other textiles are no longer allowed in the trash in Massachusetts. New state “waste ban” rules require textiles be kept out of the trash so they can be reused or recycled.

The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District advises residents to place clean, dry clothing, textiles and footwear in a plastic bag and bring them to a textiles drop-off location. Never place textiles in a recycling bin.

Textiles are defined as anything from clothing (shirts, sweaters, pants) to footwear (sneakers, sandals, cleats) to accessories (bags, belts, hats) to linens (sheets, towels, fabric and more). These items can be torn, stained, out of style or missing a mate, but all textiles must be clean and dry, according to the waste management district. Items that cannot be reused or sold in thrift stores are sorted, baled and sold to recyclers who make insulation, padding and wiping cloths.

Textiles that are contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, oil or hazardous substances may go in the trash. To keep textiles dry and clean, the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District advises to place them in a plastic bag and tie it up.

There are many local drop-off locations. Textile drop boxes accept the widest range of items; smaller, independent resale shops may be more restrictive in what they accept.

Every municipal transfer station in Franklin County hosts a textiles drop box for their residents. Some transfer stations might require access fees or annual permits. These 19 transfer stations are in: Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Greenfield, Heath, Leverett, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Rowe, Shelburne, Warwick, Wendell and Whately.

In addition, textile recycling is now accepted at local Salvation Army thrift stores. Greenfield residents may bring bags of clean and dry textiles to the Hartsprings truck that is parked at the Chapman/Davis municipal parking lot in downtown Greenfield on the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Expanding the state’s waste disposal bans is part of the 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, which aims to reduce solid waste disposal statewide by 30% over the next decade, from 5.7 million tons in 2018 to 4 million tons in 2030.

According to the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, clothing and textile products amount to 6% of all material going into U.S. landfills and incinerators, including 230,000 tons annually in Massachusetts alone. While 95% of all used clothing, footwear and other household textile products can be reused or recycled, only 15% of reusable textiles are recovered from the waste stream.

Diverting recyclable (and compostable) materials from the trash conserves increasingly limited landfill space and saves money. According to the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, the few remaining landfills in the state are scheduled to fill up and permanently close within a few years. Most trash incinerators are operating at full capacity, and the two waste incinerators in western Massachusetts went bankrupt and closed earlier this year. That trash is now being sent to landfills in faraway states such as Pennsylvania and the Carolinas. Trash disposal is expensive for municipalities and waste haulers, and due to these longer travel distances, trash costs are rising.

DO NOT PUT IN RECYCLING OR TRASH



Take textiles to a drop-off location.

Recycle Smart