



June 2022 Newsletter

Styrofoam Day will be Saturday June 11, from 9AM to 12PM at the Community Life Center. Learn more about the importance of textile recycling- find out where your textiles go and what they become.

Styrofoam Day

Textile Recycling: a Small Step with Big Environmental Benefits

Textiles are the sleeping giant of the recycling industry. Every year, Massachusetts residents and businesses throw out an astonishing 230,000 tons of textiles, including clothing, shoes, handbags, rugs, drapes, sheets, and towels.



In fact, 95 percent of this material could be reused and recycled into a range of products. As a rule of thumb, textiles and clothing in virtually any condition — be it ripped or stained — can be donated and recycled.

It should be noted that Massachusetts will ban the disposal of textiles and mattresses starting in November 2022. That means these items can no longer be put in a trash bin and go on to be landfilled or incinerated.

The good news is that Salem residents have many options for donating clothing and other textiles, from curbside pickup to numerous drop-off bins throughout the city.

Where do donated textiles go?

About 48 percent of textiles are sold as secondhand apparel through charitable organizations like Goodwill and the Salvation Army, which operate retail stores. Clothing and textiles that don't sell are baled and sold to textile brokers, who export items to local entrepreneurs in Africa, where 95 percent of the population wears used clothing.

Another 20 percent is turned into industrial wiping cloths, which are sold to companies such as auto-repair shops and manufacturing plants.

The remaining 26 percent is sent to fiber converters where textiles are broken down to their basic fiber components and remanufactured into products such as blankets, insulation, carpet, and soundproofing material.

Used textiles represent an important industry segment in Massachusetts. More than 25 companies and nonprofit organizations sort, reuse, “upcycle” or convert used textiles into new products. Donating textiles supports local charitable organizations that provide jobs and training to Massachusetts residents. Keeping textiles out of the trash can significantly reduce disposal costs for local governments and businesses.

Environmental impact of recycling

The apparel industry currently faces huge environmental challenges, including greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and toxic chemical use. The apparel industry produces about 1.025 gigatons of carbon emissions annually. Raw material production, such as knitting, weaving, dyeing, and finishing contributed to 50 percent of emissions. Raw material extraction, processing of material into yarn, and assembly of final product produced the remaining 50 percent of emissions. Increasing textile reuse and recycling can reduce the production of new clothing.

About 63 percent of textile fibers, such as nylon and polyester, are derived from petrochemicals. The remaining 37 percent is cotton, in which the current production methods’ reliance on water and toxic pesticides are believed by many experts to be unsustainable. Consider it takes one-third of a pound of pesticide and 713 gallons of water to make one cotton t-shirt.

Salem textile recycling options

Curbside Textile Pickup

[Click here](#) to schedule a free pickup

Textile Drop-off Bins:

St. Peters Church, 24 St. Peters St.

Baystate Textile bins are located outside of all Salem public schools

Planet Aid bins are located throughout Salem

[For more information, click here](#)

Connect with Us



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