

# Recycle-News-Haven

The NHSWRA Newsletter

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## Feature

### **Miguel Cartagena** on curbside recycling in New Haven



*I sat down with Miguel the other day and asked him for his thoughts on curbside recycling in the City. Miguel is a good guy to talk to on this subject as he has had 25+ years' (!) experience on the ground and in the front lines of collection. Having originally taken on the supervision of the Recycling division of Refuse and Recycling at New Haven Public Works seven years ago, he has recently been promoted to director of all of Municipal Refuse and Recycling collection in New Haven. Here are Miguel's candid responses to my questions:*

***What are some of the challenges out there in curbside recycling?*** He says that the messaging regarding proper recycling is lost in areas which have a high turnover of residents, and crowding in apartments. People perhaps “just don't care” because they are not that connected to the community, and are not familiar with collection mandates in the area. It is in these “hot spots” as he calls them, that awareness campaigns must be brought to the community repeatedly. Lack of participation is an issue also, as is misunderstanding of single-stream recycling.

***Are there any particular materials that stand out as main offenders in contamination of curbside recycling that you would like to share with our readership?*** Yes, “toys, bags, leaves, clothing. Also, styrofoam, car parts.” In particular, people don't seem to realize that not all plastic is recyclable. And many don't seem to realize it's primarily just bottles, cans, paper and cardboard. He thinks that some of this is due to confusion in that over the years, recycling mandates and practices have changed. For example: “we used to have them put things in clear bags at one point.” (Now of course nothing should be in bags or even bundled). He admonishes that it is not all about being unaware – there is a significant amount of deception going on out there. One can only assume that if there are non-recyclable items in the bottom of the toter, the resident is hoping that these won't be noticed. And by the time the toter is emptied into the City truck, it is indeed too late to put everything back in the can and on the curb!

***What is the DPW policy when it comes to curbside recycling violations?*** After not having anyone for awhile, Public Works just hired someone again for enforcement. Miguel is not sure what the inspector's process is – the position has only been filled for two months or so. As far as what the crews are doing now, his policy is “Just leave it [a toter with a lot of unrecyclable material] on the curb, or [if it's mostly garbage] put it in with the rest of the garbage.” “We used to have stickers [with info, placed on toters] back in the day.” I asked him if he thought that was helpful, and he said no, that getting out there and talking to the people was the way to go.

***Re: the crews – is there anything that customers can do to make it easier and safer for them to do their job?*** Yes – simply make sure the toters are on the curb, and that there is access to them from the truck. Also, don't overload the toter!

***I understand you have a new system you are developing that is quite a change in the way the DPW trucks are utilized for collection. Could you explain it and perhaps why you went that 'route?' (pun intended!)*** The new system has each crew collecting both garbage *and* recyclables (still two separate runs). It won't affect the customers at all, but it might make crews aware of what goes on overall and allow them to exercise more control when it comes to lack of diversion away from garbage or contamination of recycling.

***Going forward, what do you see as the DPW's role in increasing compliance and participation? Any specific practices, incentives, awareness campaigns?*** Incentives are helpful, “but unless we start enforcement I do not see these issues going away.” He suggests that landlords of smaller units that are served by the City should also be made more accountable. He also believes that getting kids more involved and aware would be a major step in the right direction.

I thanked Miguel for his time and efforts toward a cleaner, greener city, and I also thank all those in New Haven municipal curbside Refuse and Recycling that go out there day after day and do their best to get it done!



## **Feature** **Time in a Bottle Bill** – *CT Expanded Bottle Bill*

*In the beginning of June, 2021, Connecticut finally passed the revised Bottle Bill. Governor Lamont has now just signed it into law. Here are the features, broken down for you:*

### **THE MATH**

CT's bottle bill was first adopted in 1980. Deposits were set at 5 cents – same as it is 41 years later! In today's dollars, that's actually 16 cents! So, just to keep up with inflation, the current redemption

rate *should* be 16 cents. The new bottle bill just adopted would raise deposits to 10 cents (falling way short of keeping the original deposit of 5 cents adjusted for inflation!) This gives new meaning to the phrase “we need this yesterday!” (Note, though the Bill has passed, the new rate won't go into effect until 2024)

That raises the question - “Will the deposit increase be enough of an incentive to increase the returns on cans and bottles?” Other states that have gone to 10 cent deposits on cans and bottles enjoy up to 80% return on bottles. CT is currently at 50%, so the answer would most likely be yes.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The bill addresses the need for a stronger collection network, due to the expected rise in redemption rates:

Along with the incentivization of the consumer, the legislation awards deposit centers an additional incentive: higher handling fees from the distributors, encouraging development of a more robust intake infrastructure.

The State has also mandated that certain categories of retailers must install redemption centers, and others must provide staff for intake. Also, the State will phase in reverting of unclaimed bottle deposits back to the distributors, to help them with their program costs.



Along with an increase in deposit to \$.10, the CT expanded Bottle Bill mandates more reverse vending machines for collection.

## ITEMS COVERED

The deposit program currently covers beer and other malt beverages, mineral or soda water, carbonated soft drinks and waters. Starting on July 1, 2023, the program will be expanded to also cover hard cider, plant water or plant-infused drinks, juices, tea, coffee, specialty and sports or energy drinks.

Not actually a deposit, there will be a 5 cent surcharge on “nips” or small bottles of liquor, long a source of unsightly litter on roadsides. The proceeds from the surcharge will go directly to affected communities, targeted as funds for cleanup endeavors.

## THE BENEFITS

Materials Reduction Facilities (MRF's) will find some relief – they will most likely be handling less glass because glass bottles in particular will be diverted from single-stream recycling as a result of a higher return on deposit rate. (Glass in single stream often reduces to particles that can really damage MRF components over time.) Glass return-bottle recycling at the same time is much more sustainable, as it is recycled as re-usable containers or at the very least, in a less-degraded state than if it is simply single-streamed.

And of course, more glass, PET bottles and cans will be diverted from Solid Waste and single stream recycling, so less material will be showing up in landfills.

Litter will no doubt be reduced, and consequently, there will be less resultant material in the watershed and the ocean.



### THE DOWNSIDE

This bill could disadvantage the elderly and the poor – those that can't easily get to redemption centers. But with the promise of increased revenue, the hidden incentive here too points toward the creation of mobile collection services, and more reverse-vending machines in retirement and subsidized housing.

THOUGH long-overdue, the expanded bottle bill marks a start in the right direction, and the bipartisan support in the State Legislature is a hopeful sign for more efforts to come.

### FAQ Check at the Transfer Station

*In case you were wondering about certain items and if they are accepted at the Transfer Station...*



#### Yard Waste:

- tree branches – must be 6” 'around' or less.
- no grass clippings (it's against the law!)
- no dirt
- no yard waste mixed with garbage

#### Items that Residents *can* drop off that *don't* require coupons:

- Electronics (all covered items)
- Clothing and accessories (no mold, dry, in 30 gal bags)
- Mattresses and box springs (in decent condition, no mold, dry)
- Single-stream recycling
- Air conditioners and dehumidifiers

Unacceptable items at the Transfer Station:

Household Hazardous Waste (chemicals, solvents, gas, oil, florescent lights, LED or Halogen lights, rechargeable batteries, lead-acid batteries)  
concrete  
cinder block  
stone  
vehicles  
boats (unless they are 15' or shorter and you have the title in your name)(Director's discretion)  
brick (though may be acceptable in small quantities and decent condition)

go to [www.NHSWRA.com](http://www.NHSWRA.com), the Waste Wizard, for more info on particular items.



## Calendar:

The New Haven Transfer Station and the NHSWRA Administrative Offices will be closed for business Monday, July 5, 2021

The NHSWRA is planning a recycling collection and awareness event for this Fall! Stay tuned for more information on **Hometown Recycling Day 2021**.

## City of New Haven meeting schedule:

<https://newhaven-ct.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

## New Haven Public Works info:

Public Works will be closed for business Monday, July 5, 2021.

There will be no garbage or recycling pick up on that day. Your regular municipal collection day will be moved back one day for that week.

## Public Works info (cont'd):

The street milling and paving list for this year is now available:

<https://www.newhavenct.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=40317>

## Resident Services:

**Coupons are once again available! Free coupons may be obtained with a valid ID at Public Works Residents Office, 34 Middletown Avenue Monday-Friday 7am–4pm. Remember: you *must* present a coupon (one per load) in order to drop items at Residential drop-off at the New Haven Transfer Station.**

Residents are reminded that Trash and Recycling will pick up leaf bags that are paper, compostable, contain no branches, dirt or rocks and placed out at the curb on your day of your refuse collection. Yard waste will only be picked up at the curb IF branches are 4 feet in length and tied in bundles not exceeding 1 foot in diameter. Residents also have the option of delivering unbundled yard waste to the Residential Waste Center

Street sweeping rules are still in effect. For more info on parking and neighborhood routes go to:

<https://www.newhavenct.gov/streetsweeping.htm>

As always, any questions give us a call at (203) 946-7700. We have been experiencing heavy call volume but if you leave your name and phone number with question we will get back to you. If you would like a street sweeping schedule mailed to you, just leave your address and we will send it out.”

Remember you can always report Public Works issues at **See Click Fix** found on New Haven City website (see “Links,” below).

## Links:

What’s New Page- [https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/whats\\_new\\_.htm](https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/whats_new_.htm)

New Haven Public Works- <https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>

See Click Fix- <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

(continued)

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