

Recycle-News-Haven

The NHSWRA Newsletter

Feature **The State of Waste in Connecticut**

Where is our garbage ending up? How much of it is diverted into recycling and/or re-use, how much is converted to energy, and how much is simply buried?

When all is said and done, are we winning the war against waste?
Let's take a look....

In Connecticut there are basically two places where your garbage goes:

- > Waste-to-energy facilities, or
- > Out-of-state landfills (there are effectively no more solid-waste (garbage) landfills in use in Connecticut.)



Garbage- on its way from Transfer Station to Waste-to-Energy plant

Connecticut produces 3.5 million tons of waste per year! 1.2 million tons of that (35%) are recycled through the state's mandatory curbside recycling and bottle redemption programs, or composted. Of the remaining 2.3 million tons, 85% is incinerated by 6 waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities. Of those, the MIRA plant in Hartford, which used to process about 1/3 of CT's garbage, has diminished its capacity and is processing only 1/2 of that, or 1/6 of CT's garbage. Worse even, it will be closing its doors (with no replacement anticipated) by mid 2022.

As it stands now, the remaining 15% of garbage produced in CT is transported to landfills out-of-state. When the MIRA Hartford plant closes, that percentage will go up to 30-35%!

So it is readily apparent that Connecticut has a garbage problem. Yes, we are energy and environmentally conscious with the garbage we process, but since the percentage we ship out is significant, and will be rising even more starting next year, it seems we are losing the 'war on waste.' Not to mention that it is costly to ship garbage away, and when we do that there are also no benefits from conversion to energy, increasing the tax burden on the citizens and businesses in CT.

We can all help alleviate this burden by diverting more items away from the solid-waste stream by reducing use, re-using what we have, and recycling. Currently the diversion by these means in New Haven is 17%, which is comparatively low compared to other communities and the National average, so yes, we *can* do much better...

AND there is a whole sector of diversion/recycling of waste that is virtually untapped: Organics. Organics waste accounts for about 30-35% of municipal solid waste in Connecticut (and incidentally in the U.S. as a whole). CT alone produces 500,000 tons of such waste a year, and only 50,000 tons of that are currently diverted and actually processed.

Now, you might have noticed something in reading this article so far-- the amount of waste that we will be shipping out of state starting next year (30-35%) is equal to the amount of organic waste that CAN be diverted and processed – 30-35%.



Quantum Biopower anaerobic digester plant in Southington

So yes, a comprehensive organics recycling program and infrastructure in the State could make us virtually self-sufficient in waste processing! On top of that, there are other benefits to so-doing: processing compostable material (including organics) anaerobically produces NO harmful emissions, while synthesizing biofuels (and a small amount of co-products) that will save on depletion of fossil fuels. And then of course there is the savings on having to pay for removal of trash.

So why isn't this happening now, you ask?

Primarily, there is very little awareness at the consumer level of practices for collecting compostables and home composting, and at the industry level, there is very little infrastructure (translation: collection services; aerobic or anaerobic composting facilities) to support our efforts at this time.

The good news is that this sector will grow if nurtured – simply because it works for all – a better environment, reduced resource use, more energy and money saved by municipalities as well as money to be made by vendors.

The New Haven Solid Waste and Recycling Authority is looking into ways our community can tap into this resource. We'll keep you informed. If you are contemplating organics recycling, stay tuned to Recycle-News-Haven for more on how to compost on your property, and info on compost collection services or drop-off locations in your area. In the meantime, keep Reducing, Reusing and Recycling, New Haveners!

Resources for food source-reduction and diversion:

food donation
distribution networks
compostables pickup

composting materials drop-off
aerobic composting locations
anaerobic digestion facility





Where do I put this? **The New Haven Top 10**

No, we're not talking about restaurants or bands. We're talking about *The 10 most searched items in the “waste-wizard” on our website*. We figured you might be wondering how to dispose of these items as well... (free drop-off services available to New Haven residents)

1. Mattresses

'Mattress' is by far the most-searched material, so let's get rid of some of the confusion on this subject right away! Mattresses in CT fall under a “product stewardship” law which mandates that a disposal fee be built-in to the purchase price of any mattress *or box spring* sold in the State. What does this mean for you? You don't have to pay to have it recycled, and certain areas around the State are set up to receive your mattress. [The New Haven Transfer Station](#) participates in this program. So as long as you are from CT and your bedding was purchased in the State, is in fairly good condition, contains no bugs, and is not moldy or wet, we will accept it there during regular resident drop-off hours! (Baby mattresses, water beds or futons are considered regular bulky waste and require coupons at [Residential Drop-off](#).)

2. Furniture

Furniture may be dropped off at the New Haven Transfer Station. If you are resident and have current coupons (available at no cost for New Haven Residents at New Haven Public Works, 34 Middletown Ave.) and a valid picture I.D. with New Haven address (license or other), you may drop it off during residential hours. If you don't have coupons or have an oversize load, our regular per-pound rates will apply.



3. Clothes

Clothing may be dropped off in our [Textile Recycling](#) area at the Transfer Station. No coupons necessary. Items must be in 30 gal. plastic bags (or smaller) and dry, no mold. It is okay if material is ripped or stained. We also accept handbags, belts, shoes, linens and even stuffed toys!

4. Air conditioners

Your window unit air conditioner is acceptable at the resident drop-off at the New Haven Transfer Station, with coupons. Dehumidifiers are also accepted.

5. Television

T.V.'s as well as monitors and all other “covered” [electronics](#) such as computers, phones and stereos, are included under a “stewardship program” (see mattresses, above) and as such, are accepted at the residential drop-off, New Haven Transfer Station (no coupons necessary). It is important to note that there are some compounds and elements in these devices that are toxic if exposed in the environment and so it is important to dispose of them through the program.

6. Disposable batteries

Since regulation was enacted in 1996, disposable alkaline batteries contain little or no mercury, and so may be placed in your regular curbside trash.

7. Microwave (oven)

Microwave ovens also fall under “covered” electrical devices, and as such, are acceptable at the residential drop-off, New Haven Transfer Station (no coupons necessary).

8. Wood

Wood (either demolition materials or raw lumber) may be disposed of at the New Haven Transfer Station, for a **fee per-pound**. There are organizations in the area that recycle wood in decent condition as well.

9. Latex paint

We only accept solid waste at the Transfer Station. However, we accept empty paint cans, as long as they are latex-based. (Note that [PaintCare](#), a stewardship program in CT, is available for intake on paint and certain paint products. Check your local paint stores to see if they participate in this program.)

(cont'd)

10. Leaves

Leaves (seasonally- spring and fall) are acceptable at curbside if you have City of New Haven refuse service, on your regular trash pick-up day. (Call Public Works Department at 203-946-7700 for particulars). You can also bring your leaves to the New Haven Transfer Station. If you are a resident and have proper I.D. and coupons (see #2, Furniture, above) you may deposit them at no charge. If you are not a resident, you may still drop them, but for a fee (approximately 2.5 cents/lb.)

And there you have it, the New Haven top 10! Remember, you can always research how to dispose of or recycle any particular item by visiting us at www.nhswra.com and checking out our “waste wizard” app. Happy searching!



Earth Day 2021 Recap



The Authority would like to thank those who helped us honor Earth Day! (April 23 and 24). And thanks to the staff at the Transfer Station for putting in the extra hours so that we could remain open and provide you with assistance during extended citizen drop-off hours for those two days.

Here are the four lucky winners of our raffle for the event:

Leah Rumore - 1st place winner- (2) two compartment 43 Gallon Composting Unit

Jennifer Mitchell - 2nd place winner 216 Gallon outdoor Composting System

Steven Godfrey - 3rd place winner 1.3 Gallon Kitchen Compostables Bin

Meredith Miller - 4th place winner 2 bags of compost starter for organic gardening

Many of you took advantage of the coupon for one free drop-off at the New Haven Transfer Station, and a few of you signed up at discount rates for the “Residential Permit Account” which makes it more convenient to drop off at the Transfer Station with “touchless” payment and account maintenance online, as well as extended drop-off hours at the scale.



Calendar:

The New Haven Transfer Station and the NHSWRA Administrative Office will be closed for business Monday, May 31, 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, May 31, 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.

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
New Haven Public Works- <https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>
See Click Fix- <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

NHSWRA contact info and link:



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