



Solid Waste Disposal Restrictions and Waste Bans

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Sustainable Materials Management at Harvard

Recycling and composting can reduce waste disposal costs and ensure compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). Those who fail to handle materials properly are subject to MassDEP regulatory enforcement and fines.

Facility and project managers must:

- Separate banned materials from the trash stream
- Establish areas to manage recyclable and compostable materials.
- Work with Facilities Maintenance Operations or your waste vendor to establish proper recycling and composting procedures.

Harvard’s recycling partner can generally accept a broad single stream of recyclables for recovery. However certain materials, such as food waste, must be collected separately.

Waste Bans

Waste bans restrict certain hazardous, recyclable, or compostable materials from being disposed of at solid waste facilities in Massachusetts.

Waste bans also:



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- Promote reuse and waste reduction.
- Reduce the need for disposal facilities.
- Encourage recycling by ensuring large volumes of material on a consistent basis.
- Minimize releases of certain toxic materials into the environment.

Waste bans apply to all solid waste destined for a Massachusetts landfill, incinerator, or transfer station.

As a waste generator, Harvard is responsible for ensuring banned materials are diverted from the trash stream through waste reduction, reuse, recycling, or composting. Not doing so could result in rejected waste, additional handling fees, or enforcement penalties.

Disposal facility operators are responsible for ensuring prohibited quantities of banned materials aren't disposed of or transferred for disposal from their facilities. They must check incoming waste in two ways:

- Visually monitoring all loads for the presence of banned materials.
- Randomly inspecting waste load contents.

MassDEP inspects solid waste facilities to identify haulers and generators that dispose of banned materials.

To learn more about waste bans or setting up a recycling plan, [contact EHS](#).



Materials Banned from Disposal

Material	Description
Asphalt pavement, brick, and concrete	From construction and demolition of buildings, roads, bridges, and similar sources.
Batteries	Lead-acid batteries used in motor vehicles or stationary applications. All batteries are classified as Universal Waste and must follow those regulations when shipped from Harvard.
Cathode ray tubes	Any intact, broken, or processed glass tubes for visual displays in televisions, computer monitors, and certain scientific instruments.
Commercial organics (food waste)	Facilities generating over a ½ ton per week of organic (compostable) waste must have composting programs. ¹ This includes food items from kitchen waste and non-consumed portions of meals. Segregate this waste from trash and recycling and manage it as compostables. Exceptions: Animal bedding.
Glass containers	All colors of glass bottles and jars. Fluorescent lightbulbs are regulated as Universal Waste due to low levels of mercury and can't be disposed of in the trash. Exceptions: Pyrex cookware, plate glass, drinking glasses, windows, windshields, and ceramics.

¹ Each Harvard campus is a separate facility.



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Material	Description
Leaves and yard waste	Leaves, grass clippings, weeds, garden materials, shrub trimmings, and brush 1 inch or less in diameter. Exceptions: Diseased plants.
Mattresses	Any resilient material or combination of materials enclosed by ticking, used alone or in combination with other products, intended for sleeping upon (including foundations or boxsprings). Exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mattresses contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, oil, or hazardous substances.• Mattress pads or toppers, sleeping bags, pillows, car beds, carriages, baskets, dressing tables, strollers, playpens, infant carriers, lounge pads, or crib bumpers.• Waterbeds or air mattresses that don't contain upholstery material between the ticking and the mattress core.• Mattresses in futons or sofa beds.
Metal	Ferrous and non-ferrous metals from used appliances, building materials, industrial equipment, vehicles, and manufacturing processes.
Metal containers	Aluminum, steel, or bi-metal beverage and food containers.
Plastic containers	Plastic bottles, jars, jugs, and tubs. Once empty, replace caps on containers.
Recyclable paper	All paper, cardboard, and paperboard products. Exceptions: Tissue paper, toweling, paper plates and cups, wax-coated cardboard, and low-grade paper products.



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Material	Description
Textiles	<p>Clothing, footwear, bedding, towels, curtains, fabric, and similar items.</p> <p>Exceptions: Items contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, oil, or hazardous substances.</p>
White goods	<p>Appliances using electricity, oil, natural gas, or liquefied petroleum gas. These include refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, ovens and ranges, and hot water heaters.</p>
Whole tires	<p>Motor vehicle tires of all types. Whole tires may be disposed of at combustion facilities.</p> <p>Exceptions: Shredded tires (a tire that has been cut, sliced, or ground into four or more pieces such that the circular form of the tire has been eliminated).</p>
Wood	<p>Treated and untreated wood, clean wood waste (trees, stumps, and brush, including sawdust, chips, shavings, and bark).</p> <p>Exceptions: Furniture.</p>