



# Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

## Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Waste Ban on Mattresses and Textiles Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. When do the waste bans on mattresses and textiles take effect?

A: The revised waste ban regulations that ban mattresses and textiles take effect on November 1, 2022.

### Mattresses

2. What type(s) of mattresses are subject to the mattress waste disposal ban?

A: Mattresses are defined in the regulations as “any resilient material or combination of materials that is enclosed by ticking, used alone or in combination with other products, and that is intended for sleeping upon, except for mattresses that are contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, oil, or hazardous substances. Mattress includes any foundation or box spring.

"Mattress" **does not include** any mattress pad, mattress topper, sleeping bag, pillow, car bed, carriage, basket, dressing table, stroller, playpen, infant carrier, lounge pad, crib bumper, liquid or gaseous filled ticking, including any waterbed and any air mattress that does not contain upholstery material between the ticking and the mattress core, and mattresses in futons and sofa beds.”

- Excessively torn, punctured, soiled or moldy items
- Twisted or crushed mattresses or broken box springs
- Wet or frozen mattresses or box springs
- Mattresses or box springs infested with bed bugs or other pests
- Futon mattresses, fold-out sofa beds
- Mattress pads or toppers
- Infant sleeping pads; air or water beds; any other furniture or textiles

All sizes of mattresses **are** included under the ban: California king, king, queen, full, twin XL, twin, and crib mattresses.

3. What about full-foam or latex mattresses, or “mattresses in a box”?

A: Yes, those specific mattress products **are** included in the waste ban.

4. I am a resident and have a mattress that I want to recycle or donate for reuse. How can I find a convenient outlet?

A: You can visit MassDEP's mattress recycling webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/dep matt>. That page includes contact information for mattress recycling vendors. You may search MassDEP's Beyond the Bin recycling directory for organizations near you that accept mattresses for donation and reuse: <https://recyclesmartma.org/beyond-the-bin-search/>

Finally, you can search for cleanout companies near you that may collect materials such as mattresses.

5. How will MassDEP determine whether a load of trash that contains mattresses is considered a waste ban violation, i.e., a "failed load" potentially subject to enforcement? If a trash truck delivers a load of trash to a disposal facility that contains a single mattress, will this load be treated as a violation of the waste ban regulations?

A: There is no acceptable amount of mattresses that can be disposed of under the waste ban regulations. Therefore, disposal of one mattress or more would be considered a failed load. MassDEP will determine the appropriate compliance and enforcement response based on review of a specific failed load, the origin of that load, and the ability to identify the waste generator.

MassDEP generally does not issue waste ban enforcement to individuals, and instead typically issues enforcement to businesses and institutions (including municipalities) as well as waste haulers.

6. What documentation do I need if I have mattresses that I need to send for disposal because they are not acceptable by a mattress recycler?

A: If you have materials such as mattress pads or toppers that do not meet the regulatory definition of a mattress, those can be sent for disposal without further documentation. If you have mattresses that are not recyclable because they are wet, moldy, or infested with bed bugs, you should document the number of mattresses, the condition of each, and how they have been stored and managed to prevent contamination. For example, it is not acceptable to store mattresses uncovered outside and then send them for disposal because they are wet. This, along with any intentional contamination of waste ban materials, would be considered a violation of MassDEP's waste ban regulations. However, as long as materials are stored and managed properly and this documentation is maintained and provided to MassDEP upon request, unrecyclable mattresses can be sent for disposal without requiring a MassDEP waste ban waiver.

7. If the municipality or business determines that a mattress cannot be recycled, where should it be disposed of?

A: If a mattress cannot be recycled because it is contaminated as noted in the definition above; it is not subject to the waste ban and can be disposed as solid waste. This can mean that it can be sent to any solid waste disposal facility or handling facility.

8. Can municipalities use a shredder or other equipment to shred, destroy, or deconstruct a mattress at a municipal transfer station or recycling center?

A: Yes, however this activity would be regulated as either a General Permit or a Recycling, Composting and Conversion (RCC) Facility Permit. General permits have a 10 percent residual

limit. If an operation cannot comply with that limit, it would need to apply for an RCC permit. If you operate a site assigned solid waste transfer station and want to incorporate a recycling operation, this would need to be addressed through a permit modification. If you are interested in considering this option, you should consult with the solid waste section chief in your MassDEP regional office: <https://tinyurl.com/depregoff>.

## Textiles

9. What type of textiles are subject to the waste disposal ban?

A: Textiles are defined in the regulations as “clothing, footwear, bedding, towels, curtains, fabric, and similar products, except for textiles that are contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, oil, or hazardous substances.”

10. Are used wiping clothes or “shop rags” considered textiles subject to the waste disposal ban?

A: No, these would be considered as contaminated and would not be subject to the waste disposal ban.

11. I am a resident and have textiles I want to donate for reuse or recycling. How can I find a textiles recovery organization for my textiles?

A: You can visit MassDEP’s textile recovery web page at <https://tinyurl.com/deptextile>.