



Belmont Recycles

Solid Waste & Recycling Advisory Committee

Dear Neighbor,

We need your help. Perhaps you are not aware, but the Town of Belmont's Highway Division manages a comprehensive town-wide recycling program. The Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee (SWARAC), a volunteer committee of Belmont residents, provides policy guidance and outreach support for this effort. These groups have worked hard to make recycling as easy as throwing out your trash. The Town of Belmont requires all residences to recycle. This brings the Town in compliance with State regulation, as well as saving Belmont tens of thousands of dollars per year in disposal fees. We hope that you will join our efforts to increase recycling participation in Belmont!

What is recycling?

Recycling is the process of taking a product that used to be thrown away and instead reusing part or all of it to make another product. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 75% of our waste is recyclable. By saving resources and energy and with it reducing greenhouse gas emissions, recycling helps both the local and the global environment.

Why is recycling good for the environment?

It takes less energy to create new items from recycled materials than it does to create new products from raw materials. Mining minerals and milling trees into lumber requires vast amounts of energy to create products. Recycling entails reusing materials as many times as possible to conserve natural resources, and to reduce pollution as well.

Why is recycling good for communities?

Extracting materials from mines or forests is done far from the place where goods are consumed; however recycling starts in your own home. Gathering recyclables, and reprocessing them into feedstock for future products is done locally by people who live, work, and spend money in their own communities. The money Belmont saves from recycling is also available to finance other important local needs.

How does recycling reduce pollution?

Burning garbage or throwing waste into landfills produces byproducts that pollute the environment. Runoff from landfills and metals like mercury find their way into streams, rivers and oceans, fish, and eventually into human beings, harming our health.

But isn't recycling too much work?

You may be surprised to know that you don't have to remove labels from cans, jars and bottles before recycling them. Just rinse lightly to empty out the excess product. You don't have to remove plastic windows from envelopes or staples and paper clips from paper. Just put them right in the recycling container instead of the trash container. Flattened cardboard boxes can simply be stacked under your recycling bin. Recycling is as easy as throwing out the trash, but saves both money and resources.

What happens to the materials we recycle?

- Recycled paper and cardboard becomes new office paper, tissue, cardboard or packaging
- Recycled plastic bottles are used to make clothing, packaging, carpeting, car parts and park benches
- Recycled glass bottles and jars are primarily turned into new glass bottles and jars
- Recycled steel and aluminum cans come back as appliances, building materials, furniture and parts for airplanes, trains and automobiles
- Leaves and other yardwaste are composted locally into new topsoil

Why is recycling good for Belmont?

- Increased recycling could save the Town >\$135,000 per year in avoided disposal fees
- Solid waste disposal continues to cost the Town of Belmont \$600,000-\$700,000 per year
- Belmont currently diverts 40% of waste stream
- We have substantial room to increase recycling rates
- The Town saves \$64.00 for each ton of waste not sent to the incinerator
- Increasing our recycling rate to that of Lexington (58%) would cut disposal fees by more than \$150,000 per year

We encourage you to join your fellow residents who are already participating in our town's recycling program. If you need more information please contact Belmont's Department of Public Works at 617-993-2690, or visit our web site at www.town.belmont.ma.us/home. SWARAC and the Town of Belmont are happy to offer this program to our residents to help make Belmont a cleaner, more responsible place to live. Let's not waste a good thing!

Sincerely,

Belmont Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee