

Talking Trash Column – The Enterprise 03.31.23

By Amy Roth, Falmouth Solid Waste Advisory Committee member

As of April 14, 2023, recycling is mandatory in Falmouth! Actually, that statement is both true and false... recycling has been mandatory across the entire Commonwealth since the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) first implemented the Waste Bans in 1990. BUT in April, we will actually have **Rules and Regulations for Mandatory Recycling** in Falmouth that parallel and support the Waste Bans on a local level. The new regulation, along with guidance and information on recycling in Falmouth, can be found at the DPW's Curbside Trash & Recycling webpage (<https://www.falmouthma.gov/968/Curbside-Trash-Recycling>).

If you are part of the curbside program, your recycling program is already compliant with the Rules & Regulations. However, it is your responsibility to know what can be recycled in your cart (<https://recyclesmartma.org/>) and make sure you are keeping trash and recycling separate. Also, there are many Waste Ban items that are not part of the curbside or single-stream collection programs, such as mattresses, waste oil, textiles, batteries, many of which can be recycled at Falmouth's Waste Management Facility (WMF).

If you are not part of the curbside program, such as owners of apartment buildings and businesses, you are required to contract with a solid waste hauler for recycling for your facility. Your existing solid waste hauler must offer you this service, but you can choose who you contract with. For businesses, you may have more than one type of recycling, such as cardboard and mixed recyclables (single-stream). You can talk with your hauler about the best way to manage these recycling streams. If you generate a small volume of mixed recyclables and you would like to take it to Falmouth's WMF yourself, or if you have specialty recycling that gets handled differently, you can complete a *RECYCLING SERVICE EXEMPTION FORM FOR COMMERCIAL GENERATORS* with the Board of Health.

If you are a hauler of solid waste in Falmouth, you are required to also offer recycling collection to your customers and to educate customers about proper recycling. If your solid waste customers do not elect recycling collection, you must provide them with a copy of the *Exemption Form* referenced above and notify the Board of Health of all customers who requested the Form. To help maintain the quality of waste separation and recycling in Falmouth, haulers must refuse to collect solid waste or recycling that is visibly contaminated (recycling with solid waste in it, or waste with recycling mixed in) and instead place a non-collection notice on the container explaining why it was not collected. Haulers may request assistance from the Board of Health and Department of Public Works for customers that are consistently generating contaminated material.

Single-stream recycling from Falmouth is taken to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) where it is sorted and commoditized. For recycling to work well, generators, haulers, and receiving facilities must all do the right things. High quality recycling in Falmouth starts with each of us and it starts this April 14. The DPW and Health Department are here to help you understand and comply with the new Rules & Regulations,

As far as why we have them, MassDEP says: Waste bans boost recycling and support the recycling industry, which contributes thousands of jobs and millions of dollars to the Massachusetts economy. By cutting down on disposal, the waste bans also help us capture valuable resources, save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and lessen our reliance on landfills and incinerators.