



Joseph C. Sullivan  
Mayor

**BRAINTREE  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
WORKS**  
Trash/Recycling Office  
[www.braintreema.gov](http://www.braintreema.gov)



## IMPORTANT CHANGES IN RECYCLING

At one time, there were open markets for the mix of materials we traditionally considered **recyclable**. For that reason, many communities put a lot of effort into *increasing* recycling, including Braintree. At the time, the United States exported more than half of all recycling, and the bulk of it was purchased by China. Recently, China and many other countries have strengthened quality standards for recycling materials which resulted in a market loss and created an accumulation of recycling materials sitting at US processing facilities.

This major change in the industry led to the ‘curtain coming down’ on traditional recycling as we know it. Cities and towns have had to adjust to this new reality and adapt to new State Mandates to counter rapidly rising changes to process recycling.

**Much of our recycling is sorted, bundled and sold to mills to make new products, and the contaminated material is disposed of.** Today, in addition to paying for recycling processing, additional penalties are imposed for highly contaminated loads that contain banned materials such as: household garbage, bagged recycling, plastic bags and Styrofoam. **When loads from our curbside collection are determined to be over the acceptable level of contamination, we pay a higher cost.**

**This is a dramatic change from a couple of years ago when cities and towns were paid for every ton delivered for processing.** Due to the immediate increase in processing charges and extra fees, several steps were taken to address this crisis, including:

- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) established statewide standards of acceptability.
- DEP reaffirmed the Waste Bans that identify what **MUST** be recycled and what **CANNOT** be recycled.
- Braintree launched an outreach program to support the “**New Recycling Guidelines**”, including advertising, mailings, school programs, etc.
- Braintree intensified curbside inspection of trash and recycling carts, and provided information about the excess or banned materials (if found in carts) that impact the fees the Town is paying.
- The Town of Braintree’s curbside collection company, Sunrise Scavenger, can no longer pick up and empty recycling carts that contain an excess of contaminated products.

The majority of residents are adjusting to the **New Recycling Guidelines**, but more effort to comply is necessary to control costs.

Lastly, please remember:

- We all must understand what is acceptable and what is not. The term “**when in doubt, throw it out**” does in fact apply to the **New Recycling Guidelines**.
- The traditional numbers in the diamond on the bottom of containers no longer apply and should not be used for reference of what is recyclable and what is not.
- All items should be loose in your recycling cart.
- No bagged material. No plastic bags or plastic wrap of any type.
- Avoid recycling take-out food containers/cups and all products made of Styrofoam.

For more information about the mandated **New Recycling Guidelines**, please refer to the literature mailed to you, or [braintreema.gov/recycling](http://braintreema.gov/recycling) or call us at 781-784-8088.