



CITY OF BOSTON ZERO WASTE TOOLKIT

BOSTON RESIDENTS

REDUCE

The best thing you can do for the planet? Use less!

- ❑ **Buy less and use what you have:** the best thing you can do for the environment – refuse what you don’t need! Try DIY household and hygiene items to reduce waste packaging. Borrow or rent items you only need in the short term. Refuse single-use disposables, like plastic cups or utensils, when you don’t need them.

REUSE and REPAIR

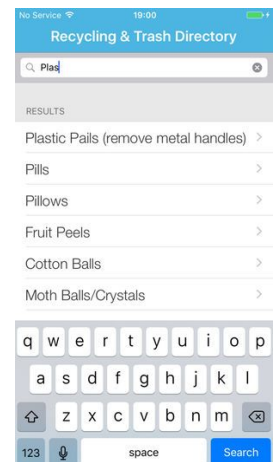
Reusing instead of buying new is great for the environment, and for your wallet! Simplify your life, use less, and reuse or repair what you do have.

- ❑ **Reuse and Reduce List:** make use of our [reuse and reduce list](#) to get tips on giving a second life to your goods.
- ❑ **Seek out Zero Waste service providers:** research and seek out businesses that provide repair, reuse or donation services. There are hundreds of bike and auto repair, tailors, shoe repair, thrift and second-hand stores, electronic repair and donation establishments in Boston!
- ❑ **Choose reusable:** choose reusable over disposable whenever possible. Try bringing a reusable coffee mug with you, carrying a reusable utensil set, or bringing food to-go in tupperware. Even simple and small changes can reduce significant waste.
- ❑ **Repair household items:** bring your broken household electronics and goods, like toasters, lamps, or backpacks, to be repaired for free at a local [Fixit clinic](#).
- ❑ **Donate:** don’t think you will reuse those clothes, furniture, or appliances? Someone else will! Seek out one of the many donation establishments in Boston, and make use of [MassDEP’s Beyond the Bin directory](#).

RECYCLE

Recycling Right – or only putting truly recyclable items in the bin – is the best way to ensure that recycling is effective, efficient, and economical.

- ❑ **Recycle Right:** recycling can be confusing, because many things that are commonly perceived as “recyclable” are not. This is because recyclables are commodities used to manufacture new goods, so they are subject to supply and demand. However, too much contamination of non-recyclable material can render an entire haul of paper, plastic containers and metal as trash. Therefore, it’s critical to [Recycle Right](#) and keep up to date with what is and isn’t recyclable. When in doubt, use the Trash App’s recycling [directory](#) or MA’s [Recyclopedia](#) to make



sure what you're tossing in the recycling bin will actually get recycled.

- ❑ **Download the Boston Trash App:** this is a great tool to check curbside pick up times, hazardous waste and electronics recycling events, and yard waste collection. Also, make use of the *Recycling & Trash Directory* to properly dispose of any item.
- ❑ **Seek out recyclable products:** if you must use single-use disposable products, choose ones that are recyclable. Paper, cans, clean aluminum foil, glass and plastic bottles, jars and tubs can be recycled.
- ❑ **Dispose of hazardous and electronic waste responsibly:** the City hosts free drop-off events for hazardous household waste (like lead paint and household products with labels that say flammable, corrosive, explosive, or poisonous), and for recycling electronics, textiles and shredded paper.
- ❑ **Recycle textiles:** the City is planning to offer free curbside textile collection for Boston residents in 2019. While donating unwanted clothes for reuse is a priority, recycling your torn or unwearable clothes, household linens or textiles at the curb is a responsible way to dispose of them.
- ❑ **Buy products made with recycled content:** recycling doesn't end at the curb. To support a strong market for recyclables, seek out products made out of recycled paper, plastic, or metal. This helps to increase the demand for recycled materials.

COMPOST

Try to avoid tossing food scraps in the trash bin – it wastes the valuable energy inside your leftover food! Please dispose of your food waste responsibly with these tips:

- ❑ **Compost at home:** with the proper management and tools, you can compost at home either indoors or out. Composting at home is especially beneficial if you or your neighborhood has a garden. Learn more about indoor and outdoor composting from the City of Boston, the EPA and Eco-blogs. The City sells compost bins at a discounted price.
- ❑ **Drop off your food waste:** if you're not up to composting at home, the City runs a community composting program called Project Oscar, with five drop off locations. Before dropping off your food scraps, make sure you check what you can and cannot compost. Meat and dairy products are no-go's, but coffee grounds, tea bags, napkins and wine corks are all compostable!
- ❑ **Toss food in your garbage disposal:** while composting your food is a more efficient use of your leftovers' nutrients and energy potential, tossing your food waste in your sink's garbage disposal is better than in the trash. Your garbage disposal gets mixed with the city's sewage, and all of this organic material is anaerobically digested to make energy and fertilizer.
- ❑ **Buy smart:** even small changes in the way you buy food can make big differences. Buying from local producers at farmer's markets or subscribing to a farm share will support your community and reduce waste packaging. Also, be careful to only buy what you know you can eat before it goes bad.