

## **Textile recycling, now more than ever**

According to the MA Department of Environmental Protection, businesses and residents in Massachusetts dispose of approximately 230,000 tons of textiles annually, when instead about 95% these materials can be reused or recycled.

However, what do you do with those clothing and fabric items, old shoes and hats that are not suitable to be reused or donated to our local thrift shops?

Fortunately there are several options in Bourne. The Residential Recycling Center on Route 28 has several containers maintained by charities such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army and Planet Aid. Through this program, the ISWM Department recycled 28 tons of textiles in 2019.

The other option is to participate in the Bourne Textile Recycling Program sponsored by the Bourne Parent Teachers Association. These boxes are located at all four Bourne Schools; Bourne High School, Bourne Middle School, Bourne Intermediate School and the Bournedale Elementary School, as well as Upper Cape Regional Technical school and on Joint Base Cape Cod. The advantage of these locations is that donations can be made at any time, day or night, with the assurance that your items will be helping our schools and our community without the need for a residential recycling center sticker.

These boxes are provided by Bay State Textiles which collects the containers weekly and weighs them. As part of the Bay State Textiles Recycling Rebate Program, these recyclables are returned to the PTA as funds that can be used for our schools. As of the end of 2019 the program has recycled nearly 75 tons of materials since the program began in 2014 garnering the PTA over \$8,800 for its programs which benefit the entire community.

Rather than consume valuable airspace in the landfill, these textiles are managed several ways. The MA DEP estimates that about 45% of donated textiles are reused and sold as secondhand apparel, either through charitable organizations or for-profit exporters that sell baled clothing to developing countries. Another

30% of donated textiles are converted to industrial wiping cloths for industries such as automotive and public works. The final 20% is sent to fiber conversion companies where textiles are broken down into their basic fiber components to be remanufactured into insulation for automotive vehicles or home, carpet padding, or sound-proofing material.

Items that are ripped or missing parts are fine for donation and can include, shoes, accessories and linens in addition to clothing. The only unacceptable donations are wet/moldy items or items contaminated with oil or hazardous substances. All items must be in bags before being placed in the boxes. More information can be found at the "Recycling in Bourne" Quick Link found at [Townofbourne.com](http://Townofbourne.com).