Optimizing Our Recycling Education & Outreach Efforts

Reduce, reuse, recycle-palooza! | November 19, 2020

Erin Victor, Environmental Analyst
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Recycle Smart

:tricycle.org

Recycle Smart

BY THE NUMBERS · SEPTEMBER 2020

SOCIAL MEDIA

26,496 followers

across the Recycle Smart MA Facebook, Twitter & Instagram social channels

WEBSITE

360,749 unique visitors

landed on the Recycle Smart MA website

NEWSLETTER

4,115 subscribers

have signed up to receive monthly Recycle Smart newsletters.

RECYCLOPEDIA

135,255 unique users*

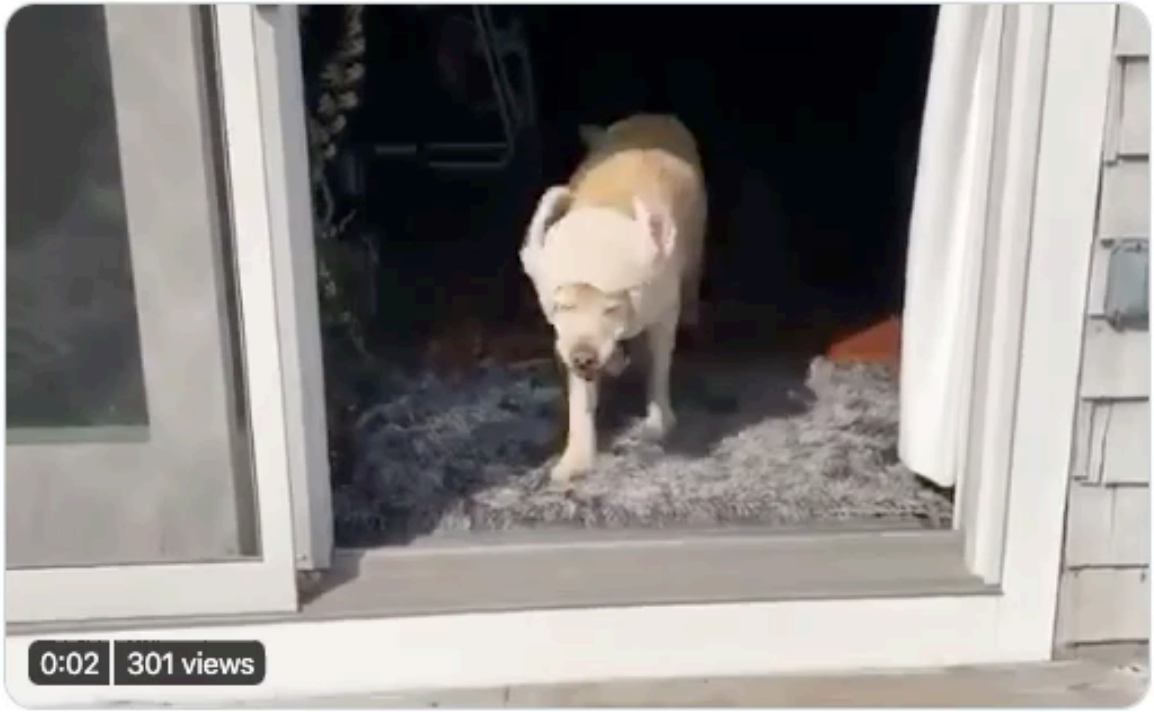
utilized the Recyclopedia search tool to determine if an item was recyclable or not.

*as of Nov. 17,2020

LEARN MORE AT RECYCLESMARTMA.ORG

Recycle Smart MA @RecycleSmartMA · Mar 30

March is going #OutLikeALamb (weather-wise) but it feels like a lions' den out there. While staying safe at home, test your recycling knowledge by searching the Recyclopedia. Type in an item and find the answer to hundreds of recycling questions! recyclesmartma.org



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Agenda

Where are we going?

- Recycle Smart MA Background
- Tips + Tricks for Recycling Outreach
- Q&A

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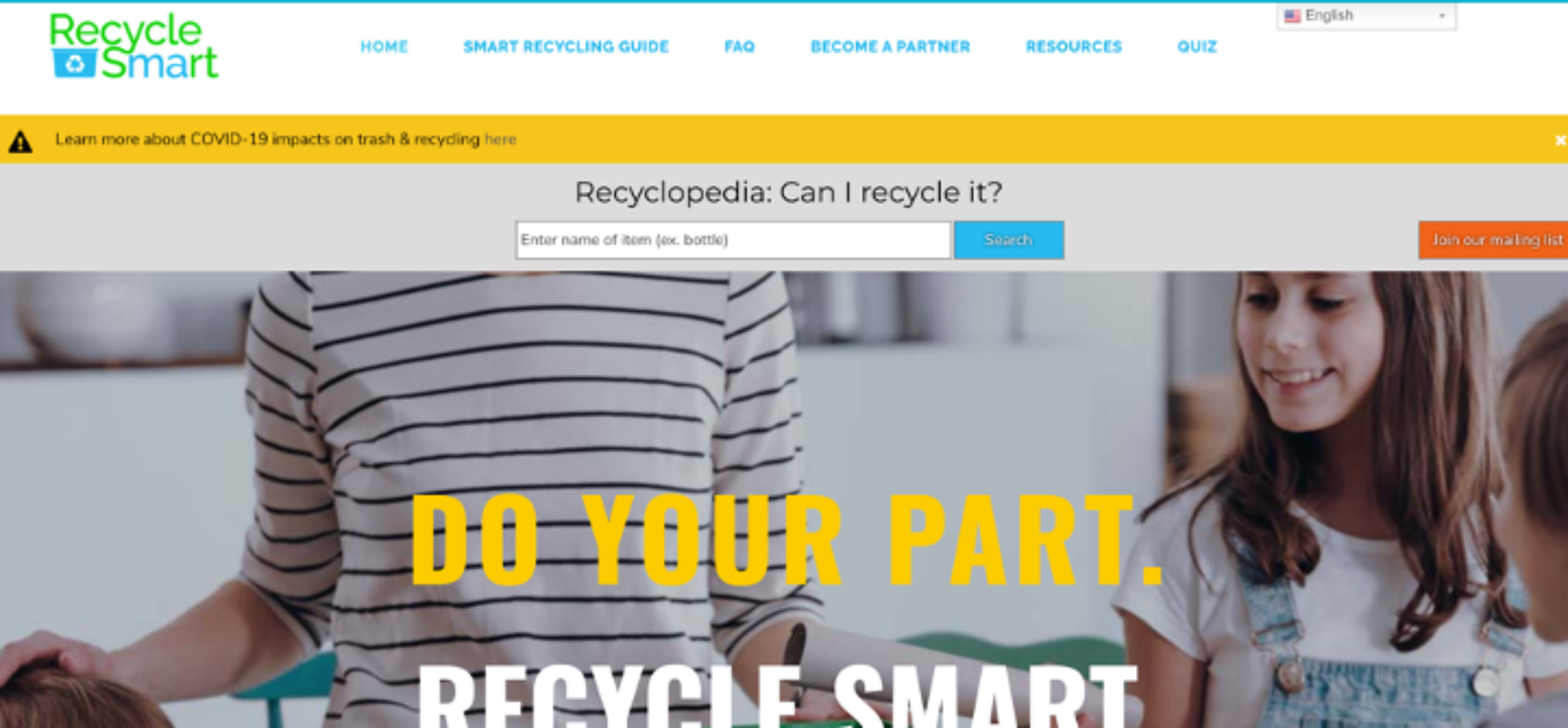
RecycleSmartMA.org



Recycle Smart

Smart Recycling Guide

Your go-to reference for recycling in Massachusetts

MassDEP AN INITIATIVE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Metal

Food and Beverage Cans
empty and rinse

Plastic

Bottles, Jars, Jugs and Tubs
empty and replace cap

Glass

Bottles and Jars
empty and rinse

Paper & Cardboard

Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Boxes
empty and flatten

NO!

Do Not Bag Recyclables
No Garbage

No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap
(return to retail)

No Food or Liquid
(empty all containers)

No Clothing or Linens
(use donation programs)

No Tanglers
(no hoses, wires, chains or electronics)

Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

Enter name of item (ex. bottle) Search

Use our online search tool at: RecycleSmartMA.org

RecycleSmartMA.org

All recycling programs in Massachusetts accept the items pictured above.

Printed on Recycled Paper

Recycling Confusion

According to our 2015 market study:

- 77% of Massachusetts residents “strongly agree” they know what they can and can’t put in their household recycling bin
- 8 in 10 think any plastic with a number on it can be recycled
- Nearly 50% believe plastic bags can go in the recycling bin

There is a big gap between what people think they know and what’s actually correct

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Our secret sauce

Tips & tricks for breaking through the noise and inspiring behavior change

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1. Get to your point, fast
2. Show, don't tell
3. Know your audience
4. Remove the hurdles
5. Ask for help
6. Iterate, iterate, iterate

Tip 1.

Get to your point, fast

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The average attention span today:

8 seconds

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Short & to the point

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Go ahead, get emotional

Drowning in packing peanuts? Many pack-and-ship stores (FedEx, UPS, Kinkos, etc. will accept them for reuse! Remember: they do NOT belong in your recycling bin!

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Use Humor

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Frame the message

Negative messages work best when combined with clear instructions

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Frame the message

Positive messages work best when paired with abstract concepts

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Tip 2.
Show, don’t tell

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almost

50%

of your brain
is involved in

visual processing [5]

70%

of all your

sensory receptors

are in your eyes [4]

we can get
the sense of a

visual scene

in less than
1/10 of a second [6]

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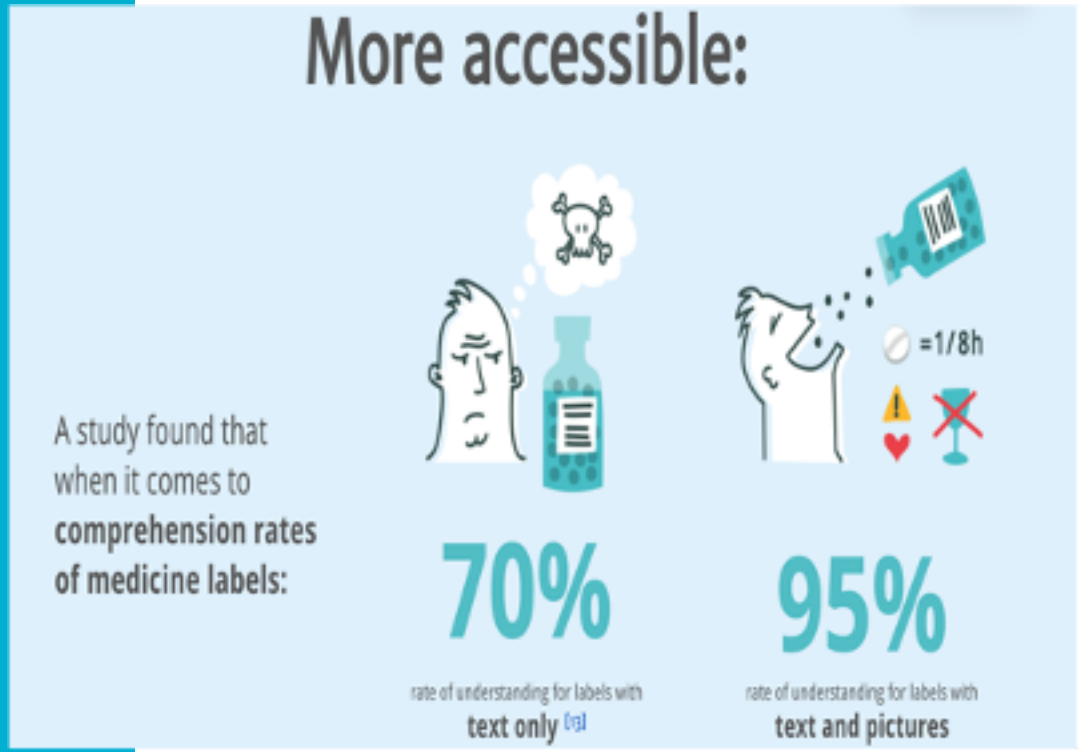
neomam.com

A pictures is worth a thousand words



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Printed on Recycled Paper

The power of videos

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The art of storytelling

Recycle Smart

📷: media-partners.com

Moe Says No

Telephones are not recyclable

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Tip 3.
Know your audience

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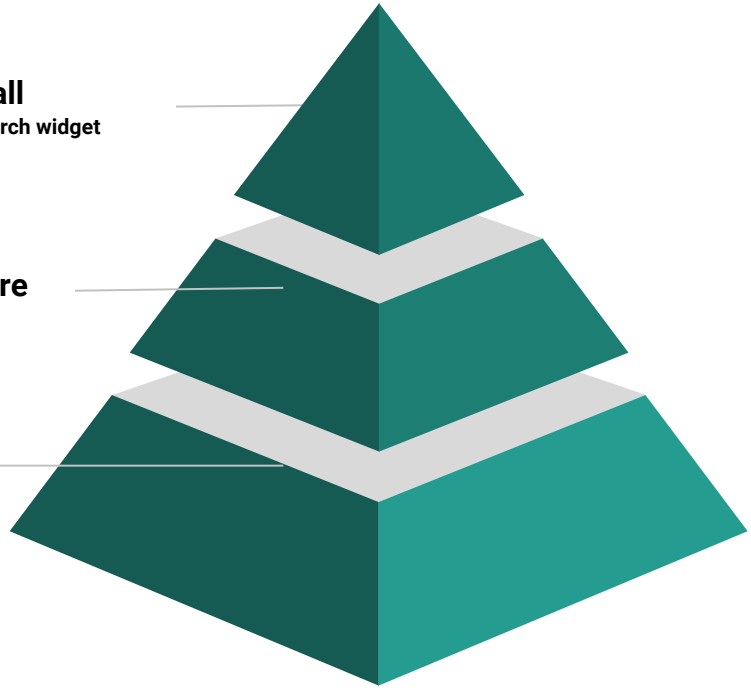
The Information Hierarchy

3 **A few want it all**
The recyclopedia search widget

2 **Some want a little more**
The Smart Recycling Guide

1 **One simple message**
Do not bag recyclables



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Where we look for information

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INFORMATION SOURCES
WHERE WOULD YOU TURN FOR INFORMATION ON RECYCLING?

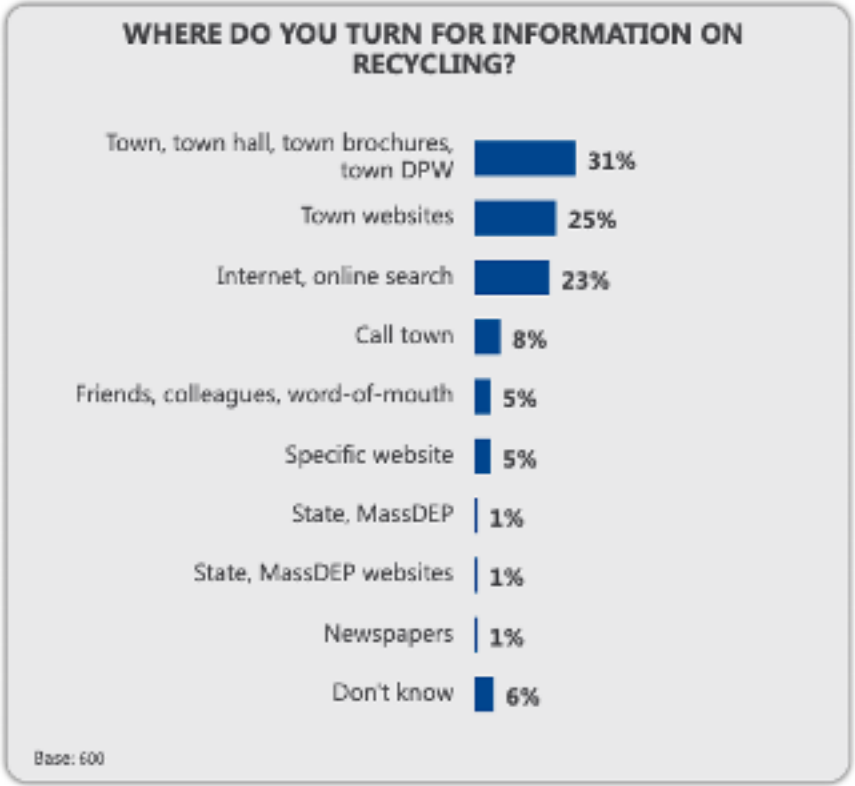
Information sources

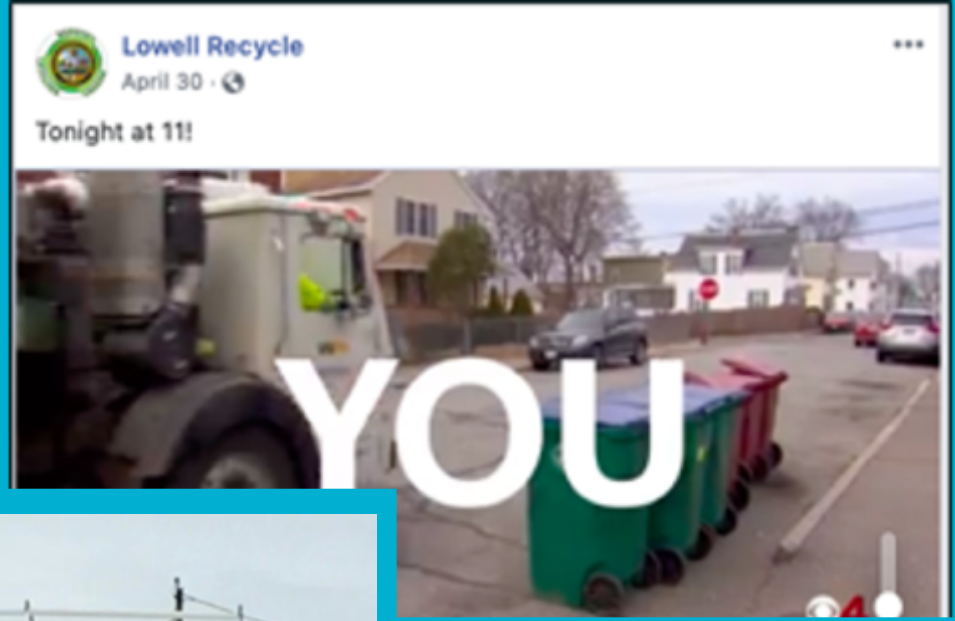
Internet is the go-to resource, whether search or to a town website (48% + 6% who use MA state or other sites).

But, significant numbers go directly to town resources or look to town supplied information. (31% + 8% who would call their town).

Very few look to mainstream media for information on recycling.

In general, younger residents are more apt to use the internet and older residents are more likely to use an in-person approach.





Plastic bags causing the problem

Contaminated recycling costing the town

By PAIGE IMPINK
News Correspondent
paige@yourtownsrier.com

TEWKSBURY — "Single use plastic bags are not recycling symbol on them," said Town Manager Richard Montuori.

The bags are considered contaminants in the town's recycling toters and are part of a much larger problem and cost that Tewksbury is now facing.

"Residents need to return those bags back to the stores where they made purchases," Montuori said.

Plastic bags get caught up in the machinery that sorts single stream recycling and ding their recyclables, but Montuori and Assistant Town Manager Steve Sadwick said that Tewksbury residents are putting trash and non-recyclables in the bins and it is going to cause fines and rejection of the town's recyclables.

"The vendor can reject our loads based on contamination," Montuori said.

This results not only in a fine from the vendor, but the follow-on cost of the load being sent to the trash contractor who then charges by the ton to dispose of that load. It will end up in a landfill or be incinerated.

It is a serious problem. According to details from the vendor, items such as wood, chairs, tires, wood

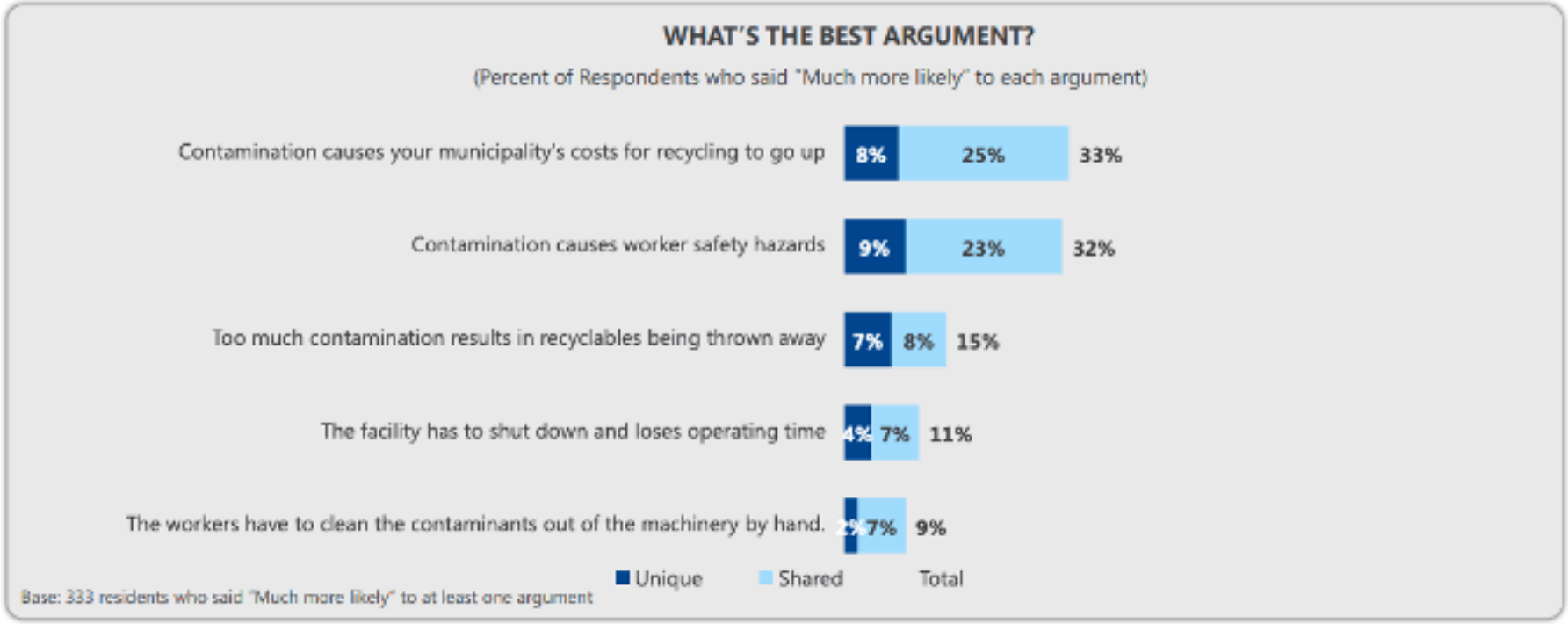
Montuori.

Sadwick said the Department of Environmental Protection gave Tewksbury a grant to educate and inspect the recycling toters to try to improve compliance.

"Residents are sent a recycling calendar every year and we have information on the town website," said Sadwick. "We are going to send postcards and have informational signs," he explained, which will detail what can and cannot be put in the recycling bins.

There is even funding for temporary recycling inspectors for positions and those interested should contact Town Hall. Tewksbury has sent notices about the use of plastic bags to "bag" recyclables and the problems they cre-

CONTAMINATION OF RECYCLABLES
WHAT'S THE BEST ARGUMENT TO GET PEOPLE TO BE MORE CAREFUL?



Tap into local pride

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Tip 4.
Remove the hurdles

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Make it easy

(or at least easier!)

: zacklegend

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"If you want people to change, you can provide **clear direction** or **boost their motivation and determination**. Alternatively, you can simply **make the journey easier**. Create a steep downhill slope and give them a push."

- Chip Heath and Dan Heath
  Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard

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:KAB

Make it accessible, clear & consistent

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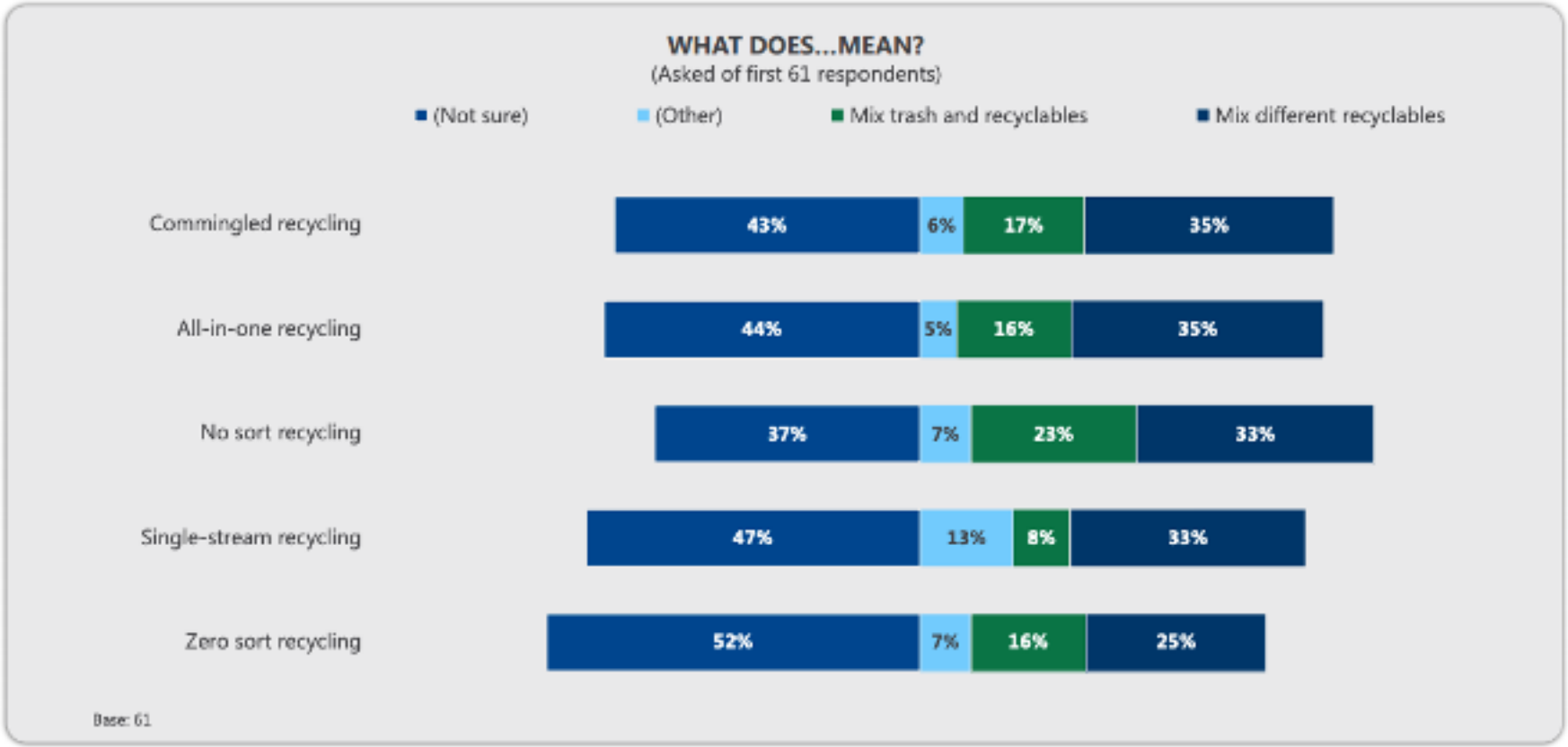
RECYCLING VOCABULARY
AS FAR AS YOU KNOW, WHAT DOES...MEAN?



Provide direct feedback

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Recycle Smart Quiz

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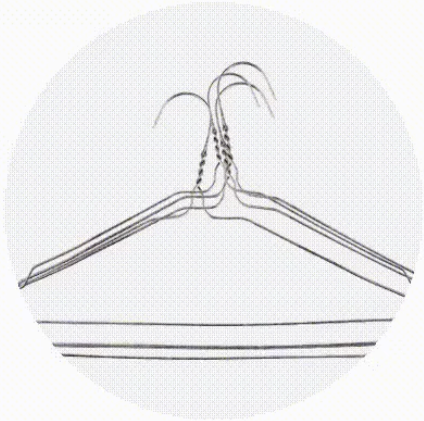
Which of these metal items is recyclable in your recycling bin?



- [ ] Tanks
- [ ] Hangers
- [ ] Pipes
- [ ] None of them

Which of these metal items is recyclable in your recycling bin?

- [ ] Tanks
- [ ] Hangers
- [ ] Pipes
- [ ] None of them

- [x] Tanks
- [ ] Hangers
- [ ] Pipes
- [ ] None of them

Oops!

Yes, it's metal, but the sorting equipment at the recycling sorting facility is not designed to handle metal items that aren't container-shaped (cans and bottles). Bike wheels, clothes hangers, broken gutters and even old frying pans (aka "scrap metal") are not OK in your household recycling bin.

Search the Beyond the Bin directory to find a scrap metal drop-off site or visit your municipality's recycling web page.

- [ ] Tanks
- [ ] Hangers
- [ ] Pipes
- [x] None of them

Correct!

Yes, it's metal, but the sorting equipment at the recycling sorting facility is not designed to handle metal items that aren't container-shaped (cans and bottles). Bike wheels, clothes hangers, broken gutters and even old frying pans (aka "scrap metal") are not OK in your household recycling bin.

Search the Beyond the Bin directory to find a scrap metal drop-off site or visit your municipality's recycling web page.

Tip 5.
Ask for help

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Tap into local influencers

Talking Influence

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SIGN UP TODAY

RECYCLE SMART PARTNER PROGRAM

Hundreds of organizations have become Recycle Smart Partners.
Are you one of them?
Learn more at: **RecycleSmartMA.org**

- Informative content for your recycling education efforts
- Massachusetts recycling updates
- Partner badge for your website and email signature
- "Binspiration" from our featured partners
- Integrate Recyclopedia search widget on your website

Recycling Resources | Bay State R

recyclesmartma.org/partner-spotlights/

English

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HOME SMART RECYCLING GUIDE FAQ BECOME A PARTNER RESOURCES QUIZ

Recyclopedia: Can I recycle it?

Enter name of item (ex. bottle) Search

Join our mailing list

Tip 6.
Iterate, Iterate, Iterate

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Use Data

Recycle Smart Marketing Goals for 2020

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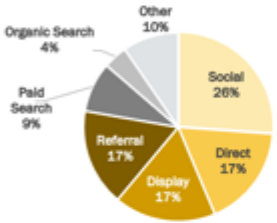
LIFETIME WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER

WEBSITE TRAFFIC SOURCES

335,985 people have visited the website



MOST-VISTED WEB PAGES

Webpages were **visited 678,135 times**

Other pages include FAQ, Resources Page, Become a Partner, COVID-19 Updates, and Featured Stories.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

The monthly* newsletter has **3,469 subscribers**

*From 11/2018-6/2019 MassDEP distributed two newsletters per month.

RECYCLOPEDIA STATS

The Recyclopedia was used **267,047 times.**

The Recyclopedia was used by **136,443 users,** of which **96,050 were unique visitors.**

Most searched materials

Number of times a material was searched

Cartons	10,828
Styrofoam	7,027
Pizza box	4,731
Shredded paper	3,308
Aluminum foil	3,152
Takeout container	3,117
Television	2,834
Cardboard	2,830
Books	2,816

NEWSLETTER CONVERSION

Newsletters were **opened 47,333 times**
News articles were **clicked on 7,130 times**

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Social Med

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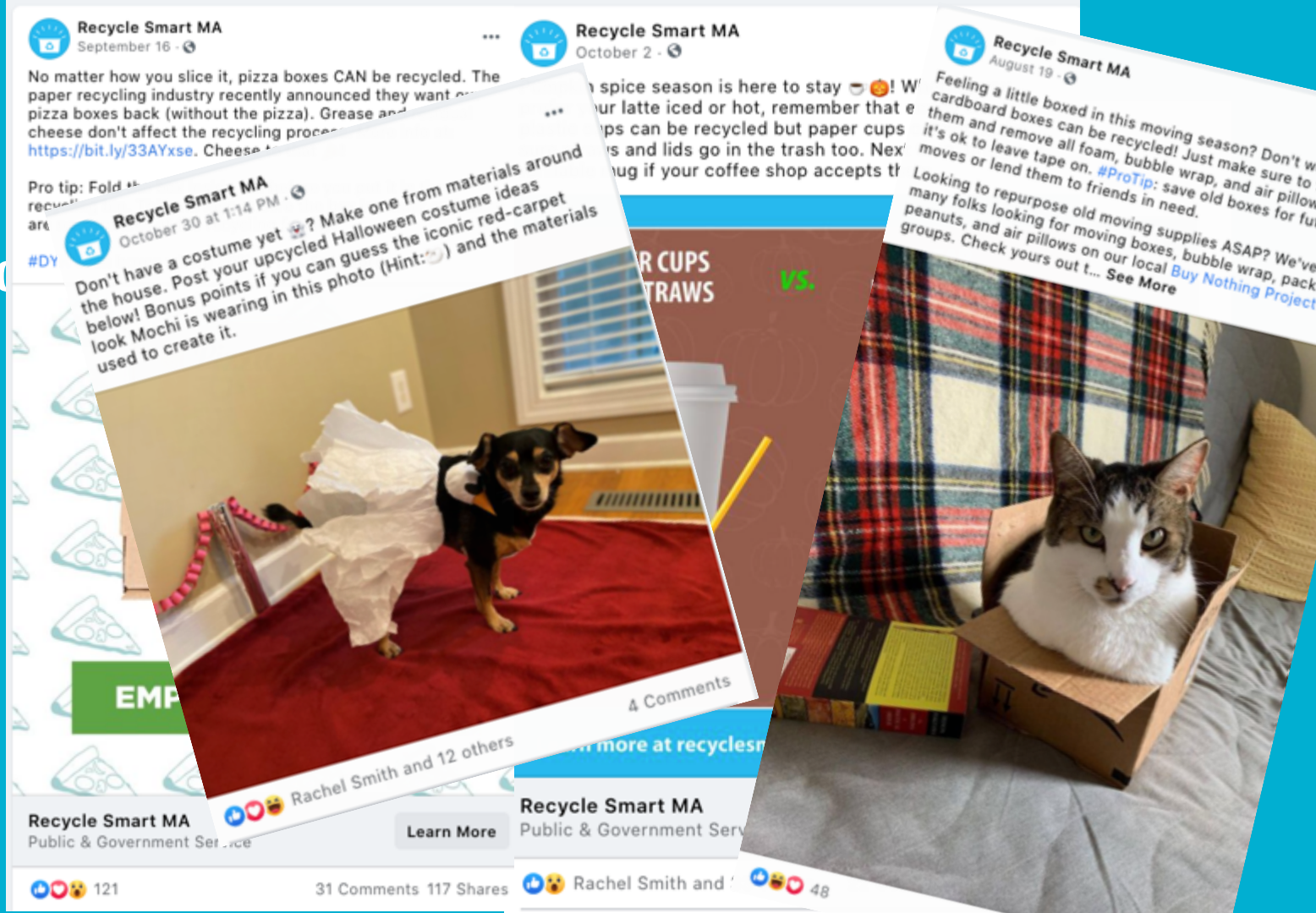

Summary of Tagging Rate Improvements (2017-2019)

- Tagging rates have **DECREASED** in all communities using the IQ Kit.
- The average decrease in tagging has **ranged** from 20% to 86%
- The **average** decrease in tagging is 62%
- The **median** decrease is 68%

Takeaway: Our methodology works!

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Experiment

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Message
Today 1:26 PM
Hey, can I recycle a necklace?
Nope, it'll get tangled in the sorting equipment.
But it's made of plastic. And it's from the 80s!!!
More reason to throw it in the garbage or donate it 😂😅
Recycle Smart MA
December 30, 2019
Even if they're plastic, necklaces should not go in the recycling bin. They can get tangled in recycling machinery and cause equipment damage or injury to workers.
If you don't want to throw them in the trash, donate them or reuse them at your New Year's party! 🥳
Tag Photo
Add Location
Edit
54
5 Comments 10 Shares
Like
Comment
Share
Most Relevant
Lance Kelly It all ends up in landfills anyway. Do research people and stop falling for the single stream recycling dream
Like · Reply · Message · 24w
Amy Sharpe Recycling rule: when in doubt, throw it out.
3
Like · Reply · Message · 24w
Maggie Sadoway Can photos be recycled along with regular paper? I heard once they can't.
Comment as Recycle Sm...
Recycle Smart

Recycle Smart

recyclesmartma

recyclesmartma While delivery services are great for #SocialDistancing, remember not all shipping materials are created equal! Cardboard boxes are recyclable, but plastic mailers, packing peanuts, and bubble mailers should be reused or go in the trash 📦👍.

Don't worry, we didn't forget about plastic bags and air pillows. Most grocery stores collect these items for recycling. For more info, check out https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/.

#RecycleSmart #RecycleSmartMA #RecyclingInMA #Recycling #ShopSmart #OnlineShopping

Liked by micaela_guglielmi and 192 others

3 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...

: mailchimp

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Information is not enough

"We know there's a difference between knowing how to act and being motivated to act. But when it comes time to change the behavior of other people, our first instinct is to teach them something."

- Chip Heath and Dan Heath
Switch: How to Change Things when Change is Hard

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Quick Recap

Tips & tricks for breaking through the noise and inspiring behavior change

1. Get to your point, fast
2. Show, don't tell
3. Know your audience
4. Remove the hurdles
5. Ask for help
6. Iterate, iterate, iterate

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Questions?

Contact us at:

Erin Victor
erin.victor@mass.gov

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Twitter

Instagram

RecycleSmartMA.org

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