

Town of Wellfleet

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) FAQs

Why is Wellfleet concerned about its trash?

- In 2012 Wellfleet shipped 1,881 tons of trash by truck to the Covanta/SEMASS facility in Rochester. Right now, the Town pays about \$18.50/ton (the “tipping fee”) and about \$27.00/ton in transportation costs. These costs total about \$85,585 annually.
- In 2016, Wellfleet’s tipping fee will increase to \$60/ton – more than triple the current rate. If Wellfleet ships the same amount of trash to SEMASS, the Town’s cost would almost double to around \$169,300 a year.

What were Wellfleet’s options for handling increased solid waste costs?

- Increase the Town’s Transfer Station subsidy (and seek a Proposition 2 ½ override or cut Town spending somewhere else).
- Increase the price on resident’s annual Transfer Station permits to cover the increased costs. The residential transfer station sticker cost would have to be substantially increased, certainly to more than \$100 annually.
- Use Pay-As-You-Throw to manage solid waste costs.

What have Town leaders proposed?

- Several years ago the Wellfleet Board of Selectmen, Board of Health and Recycling Committee began exploring how the Town could reduce solid waste costs and increase recycling, including Pay-As-You-Throw, closure of the Transfer Station, Town-wide curbside collection and disposal and single stream recycling.
- In 2013, the Wellfleet Board of Health, with the approval of the Wellfleet Board of Selectmen, voted to launch Pay-As-You-Throw on December 1, 2013 for residents and commercial businesses disposing of their own waste and on January 1, 2014 for commercial haulers.

What is Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT)?

PAYT is a system where users pay for each unit of trash disposed rather than paying a flat annual fee. PAYT works like electricity or water or cable – users pay only for what they use.

How does PAYT work?

- Residents, full and part-time, who use the Transfer Station, will buy PAYT bags at local grocery, convenience and hardware stores. *The PAYT bags are used only for trash – not for recycling.*
- Wellfleet will use a program that couples a reduced resident vehicle sticker (reduced from \$55 in 2012 to \$40 in 2013) with specially-colored trash bags with Town logos. These PAYT bags will be required for residents who wish to dispose of trash at the Transfer Station.

Why will PAYT be good for Wellfleet?

PAYT will help stabilize Wellfleet's solid waste costs. Residents who recycle or compost more help both the environment and the Town – and they can save money.

Can residents still use other trash bags?

No. The only exception is a single bag fee of \$5.00 for bags up to 35 gallons capacity. Only the special, Town-approved PAYT bags are permitted without additional fee starting December 1, 2013.

What size PAYT bags will be available and at what cost?

- 33 gallon: This size fits into most standard large trash cans and will cost \$1.50 each.
- 15 gallon: For smaller, kitchen-sized trash bins and will cost \$1.00 each.
- 8 gallon: Generally used by very small households and will cost \$0.50 each.

How does PAYT affect large families?

Large and small families can reduce their trash disposal costs several ways:

- Recycle: Less trash will reduce the number of PAYT bags needed.
- Precycle: Make purchases that reduce the amount of trash produced.
- Reuse: Keep products out of the trash stream by continuing to find uses for them.
- Compost: Fruit/vegetable waste can be home-composted and kept out of PAYT trash bags.

Is PAYT fair?

Yes, PAYT is more fair than a single annual fee. People who produce less household trash by recycling or composting more, spend less for disposal because they buy fewer PAYT trash bags.

How does PAYT help the environment?

PAYT provides an incentive to residents to recycle or compost more and that means less trash.

Why not wait to start PAYT until the current SEMASS contract expires in 2016? The sooner PAYT starts, the sooner benefits will be seen.**Will PAYT be easy and convenient?**

Yes. Residents will be able to buy PAYT bags at local stores where they routinely shop. Procedures for dropping trash and recycling at the Transfer Station will not change.

How can residents learn to recycle more?

Information will be available at the Town website, flyers will be distributed and educational programs will be offered – including about learning to home-compost.

Doesn't Wellfleet do a good job of recycling now?

Not really. It's complicated to determine exactly how much Wellfleet recycles but it is 30% or less of its waste. Other towns do much better. For example, Longmeadow, a PAYT community, recycles 58% of their solid waste according to state data. Hingham, another PAYT town, recycles about 52%. Sandwich achieved a 42% reduction in trash tonnage. 228 cities and towns across New England have achieved an average reduction in trash tonnage of 52%. 135 of those cities and towns are in Massachusetts.

How will disposal of big household clean-outs work?

Bulky waste can still be taken to the Transfer Station in residential vehicles. A resident with a vehicle permit can pay for bulky items as at present.

Won't PAYT lead to illegal dumping?

Other towns have found no appreciable increase in illegal dumping. Wellfleet will enforce its laws and monitor to see if a problem develops.

What can keep my trash bill from rising every year?

Better recycling, composting and reduced trash volumes are key factors that will help manage costs.

How will PAYT change recycling at the Transfer Station?

Recycling procedures will be the same. We are planning improvements to the transfer station to accommodate additional recycling.

Will I have to pay for recycling? I didn't before.

No, the transfer station will still accept recyclables without charge. A transfer station sticker is not required for disposal of recyclable material. A valid vehicle transfer station sticker is required for disposal of household trash in PAYT bags, bulky items and yard waste, and/or to visit the Swap Shop.

How will we know PAYT is working?

We will evaluate the program periodically to determine if recycling has increased and costs are stabilized.

Will Wellfleet still participate in a Household Hazardous Waste Day?

Yes.

What is the Wellfleet Recycling Committee?

It is a group of residents who volunteer to help Wellfleet improve recycling. They work with Town officials and Barnstable County's Solid Waste Reduction Coordinator.