

Estimate of fiber recovery rates in Massachusetts

Compiled by Claire Galkowski, Executive Director, South Shore Recycling Cooperative

4,300,000 disposed MSW 2019 * 21.1% paper products in trash= **907,300 tons of paper products disposed in Mass.**

630,000 tons paper, OCC, bottles and containers recovered * 62% paper, OCC in recycling = **390,600 tons paper products recovered in Mass.**

907,300 tons disposed + 390,300 tons recovered = **1,297,600 tons of paper products consumed in Mass.** (excluding paper which is managed in wastewater systems)

390,600 tons recovered / 1,297,600 tons generated = **30.1% of paper products recovered in Mass.**

Background and references:

Massachusetts' five municipal waste combustors are required to conduct comprehensive waste characterization studies every 3 years. [Mass. Waste Characterization Study data](#)

[Mass. Waste Characterization Study methodology](#)

Combined, they received 62% of the 4.7 million tons of MSW generated in Mass. in 2021-22. See [MassDEP 2022 Solid Waste Update](#), Table 2.

These studies indicated that 21.1% of incoming MSW is comprised of paper products.

The 2019 [Mass. Materials Management Capacity Study](#) commissioned by MassDEP indicates that in 2017, Mass. material recovery facilities, which presumably receive the vast majority of in-state generated recyclables, processed 690K tons of paper, cardboard, bottles and containers.

Waste Management, the [Northeast Recycling Council](#), and figures from 8 municipal transfer stations whose resident pre-sort recyclables fairly agree that the prevalence of paper and cardboard in the recycling stream at between 60.0% and 63.8%.