

Brewster, MA

Pay-As-You-Throw

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is Brewster concerned about its trash?

- Brewster ships about 2,700 tons of waste by truck annually to Covanta/SEMASS for energy generation. Right now, the Town pays about \$34/ton (the “tipping fee”) or about \$91,800/yr.
- In 2015, Brewster’s tipping fee will increase to \$70/ton – more than double the current rate. If Brewster ships the same amount of trash to SEMASS, it would cost around \$189,000 a year.

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

1. Increase the Town’s Transfer Station subsidy (and cut Town spending somewhere else).
2. Increase the price on resident’s annual Transfer Station permits to cover the increased costs.
3. Use Pay-As-You-Throw to manage solid waste costs.

What have Town leaders proposed?

- In 2011, the Brewster Board of Selectmen asked the Brewster Recycling Commission to explore how the Town could reduce solid waste costs & increase recycling, including Pay-As-You-Throw.
- In 2012, the Brewster Recycling Commission recommended the town adopt Pay-As-You-Throw.
- In 2013, the Brewster Board of Selectmen voted to launch Pay-As-You-Throw on October 1.

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.
- Brewster will use a program that couples a \$45 resident vehicle permit (reduced from \$110 last year) 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.

Can residents still use other trash bags?

No, only the special, Town-approved PAYT bags are permitted starting October 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 \$2.00 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.

Why will PAYT be good for Brewster?

PAYT will help stabilize Brewster’s solid waste costs. Residents who recycle more help both the environment and the Town – and they can save money.

How does PAYT affect large families?

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

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

Pay-As-You-Throw FAQs (*continued*)

Is PAYT fair?

Yes, PAYT is more fair than a single annual fee. People who produce less household trash by recycling 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 more and that means less trash.

Why not wait to start PAYT until 2015? 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 Brewster do a good job of recycling now?

Not really. It's complicated to determine exactly how much Brewster recycles but it's 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%.

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 either a flat fee or \$150 per ton for the load.

Won't PAYT lead to illegal dumping?

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

What can keep my trash bill from rising every year?

Better recycling 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 *except all users will need to have a vehicle permit.*

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

There is a cost to handling recycling, just like there is a cost to handling the trash. While the town receives a modest revenue, it does not cover the cost of recycling at the Transfer Station.

How will we know PAYT is working?

We will evaluate the program after six months and one year to determine if recycling has increased and costs are stabilized.

Will Brewster still participate in a Household Hazardous Waste Day? Yes.

What is the Brewster Recycling Commission?

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

NOTE: As of July 1, 2013 all vehicles using the Brewster Transfer Station must have a valid vehicle pass.