

# Don't Share a Bed with a Sleazy Recycler

Saying you are a mattress recycler doesn't make you one.

Brian Tippetts - 7 Rivers Recycling - August 25, 2016



Mattress recycling is growing. Mattress recycling is not just growing because it is part of sustainability but because it makes simple full cost economic sense in landfill related savings. [\(Link\)](#)

Connecticut, Rhode Island and California already have statewide legislated programs. Other states are discussing programs.

However, not all "mattress recyclers" are viable and some are downright sleazy.

What makes a "mattress recycler" sleazy? Answer: Does the "mattress recycler"...

1. Warehouse mattresses and then little-by-little bring them to a landfill?
2. Gut the mattresses for the metal only and then landfill or illegally dump the remaining carcasses?
3. Resell the mattresses? In most states there are laws about resale of mattresses; making it illegal from a practical sense in most states.
4. "Refurbish" the mattresses to resell them? See 3 above.
5. Haul the mattresses to a faraway location where it becomes impractical to know and verify what is really happening to the mattresses? And what about the cost and sustainability of long distance trucking?
6. Maintain business continuity or does it go in and out of business? Do they maintain a reasonable website and electronic footprint? Or does the mattress recycler only appear for large jobs?
7. Hand off the mattresses to another party who says they are recycling but there is no significant verification?

How then is a viable and legitimate mattress recycler vetted? Answer:

1. **Longevity.** Mattress recyclers come and go. Has the mattress recycle been in continuous business for at least one year and ideally more than 2 years?
2. **Industry engagement.** Sleazy recyclers fear getting too close to professional organizations that legitimately promote recycling and sustainability. At the same time, sleazy recyclers may want to give the impressions they are legitimate by becoming a non-participatory member of a recycling organization or by sponsoring an event. Sleazy recyclers are not likely be on a board or committee of a professional recycling group.
3. **Pricing.** If the price isn't realistic, then neither should your expectation that mattresses are getting recycled. The national average fee for mattress recycling is \$15/unit. If the mattress recycler is charging less than \$10/unit plus transportation, then this is a sign to do some investigation.
4. **SWIC.** No mention or understanding of mattresses that are **S**oiled (not just stained); **W**et (i.e. greater than 40% of surface area); **I**nfested; or **C**rushed. These mattresses are not cost effective or even safe to recycle. What is the acceptance policy? How will they be managed? What is the fee?

What are next steps in recycling mattresses?

- Stop subsidies for the landfilling of mattresses. Check out ["Math for Burying Landfills"](#)
- Vet a viable and legitimate mattress recycler.
- And if you are still struggling, you can contact me for possible direction.