

# Mattresses and Box Springs

## ***Disposal facts***

Mattresses and box springs are difficult to recycle, and few recycling options are available.

- In Minnesota, nearly 700,000 mattresses are discarded each year, with a total weight of 3.85 million pounds.
- Expected life span for a mattress is 10.8 years.
- Disassembled, a mattress consists of steel (55%), polyurethane foam (10%), cotton/felt (25%), and wood (10%).
- Because of their bulky nature, mattresses and box springs consume a greater amount of landfill space than ordinary household trash and create equipment maintenance problems for landfill operators. As a result, valuable landfill space is lost and operating expenses increase.

## ***End-Uses***

Materials recovered from mattresses can be put to productive use.

- Metal (30%) Steel is used to manufacture new steel products.
- Wood (23%) is shredded to provide mulch or composted.
- Polyfoam (10%) is used to manufacture high-end carpet pads.
- Polypad (4%) from mattress covers or “toppers” (foam sewn to cover) are used to make low-end carpet pads.
- Cotton stuffing (15%) can be used as filler for packaging, shipping pads, wall insulation and road noise abatement material in vehicles, though this material has been difficult to market in Minnesota.
- About 18% of processed mattresses and box springs goes into the garbage.

## **Minnesota Success Story: Goodwill Industries (Duluth)**

A pilot program in Duluth, operated in partnership by Goodwill Industries, has been in operation since 2004. Goodwill employees manually deconstruct mattresses and box springs and separate materials for recycling. One person working on a spin table can process 35 mattresses per day including time for separation of commodities and baling. Goodwill can handle up to 1,500 units per month.

This program has expanded its collection system to several drop-off locations around the state. Contact Goodwill Industries (218-722-6351) for information about adding a drop-off location or shipping commercial quantities of old mattresses and box springs for recycling at their Duluth location.

### **Current locations (as of December 2006)**

- Duluth (St. Louis County): 218-722-0761
- Carlton (Carlton County): 218-384-9178
- Harris (Chisago County): 651-674-7268
- Brainerd (Crow Wing County) 218-824-1290
- Cambridge (Isanti County): 763-689-4056
- Mora (Kanabec County): 320-679-4930
- Two Harbors (Lake County): 218-834-8304
- Milaca (Mille Lacs County): 320-983-6474
- Hinckley (Pine County): 320-384-6596
- Virginia (St. Louis County): 800-450-9278
- Hibbing (St. Louis County): 800-450-9278
- Brookston (St. Louis County): 800-450-9278