

Grain Bag Recycling

Purpose: To reduce the grain bags sent to landfills from your brewery and recycle, repurpose, or downcycle them to other industries.

Problem: Grain bags are not recyclable through traditional single stream recycling programs and generally will contaminate other recyclable materials, end up in a landfill, or be incinerated.

Solutions:

Reduce: Switch to super sacks or a grain silo when possible.

Reuse: Make tote bags, wall art, etc. to give the bags another life.

Recycle: Making relationships with your local waste district is a pivotal first step in finding a home for your grain bags. Staff at your local solid waste planning entity can best direct your brewery to currently available solutions for your grain bags. Often, they can also help find solutions to many of your breweries other solid waste problems including, but not limited to: Plastic shrink wrap, Plastic banding for pallets, Broken/Unusable plastic can and bottle carriers, Broken pallets etc.

Check out this Department of Environmental Conservation map to see which solid waste planning entity serves your town and how to contact them:

https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Images/solid_dist.pdf.

Some examples of grain bag recycling programs that are currently working around the state include:

NWSWD in Georgia, VT is accepting empty #5 grain bags **with or without** # 4 liners from all manufacturers. Removing all string and paper is a good practice, as these are contaminant materials, although it is not necessary to remove the string on the bottom of the bag. 3 breweries are currently delivering to NWSWD with great success.

Country Malt Group in conjunction with Carpenters Motor Transport have also been piloting a program across the state to send clean and separated grain bags (as detailed above) directly to plastics processors. 3 breweries are currently participating in this program and CMG/Carpenters are looking to recruit more participants.

Remember: Change doesn't happen without effort, but you are not alone. If your brewery is interested in making a difference by getting on board with one of these programs- it's going to require some effort on your part and the VBA Sustainability Committee is here to help.