



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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Notice to Local Boards of Health, Restaurants and other Hospitality Associations about Beer Waste

The closure of restaurants, bars, and other venues due to the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in an abundance of beer and other food waste going stale in these establishments. Beer, in particular, has a very high Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), making it what is referred to as “high-strength wastewater,” which also has a very low pH. The combination of the beer’s high BOD and low pH makes disposing of stale beer in the sewer system extremely problematic, with the potential to cause damaging conditions within the sewer system and to potentially overwhelm the receiving wastewater treatment plant. Given the current volumes of stale beer and other food waste across the Commonwealth, it is imperative that it is disposed of properly. MassDEP and MWRA recommend:

1. Stale beer and other food waste should not be disposed of down the drain.
2. Restaurants, bars, and other venues should work with distributor to collect full and partially full kegs.
3. Through MassDEP or RecyclingWorks, distributors and other venues can explore options for disposal at anaerobic digestion facilities. More information can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/map-list-of-massachusetts-sites-accepting-diverted-food-material-february-2020/download>. For assistance, contact RecyclingWorks at 888-254-5525 or email info@recyclingworksma.com.

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370
MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

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