

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT FURNITURE WASTE AND RECYCLING? THE EPA STATISTICS ARE ASTOUNDING!

Furniture and Furnishings

Furniture and furnishings include items such as sofas, tables, chairs and mattresses. EPA used data on sales of furniture and furnishings from the Department of Commerce for this analysis.

To measure the generation of furniture and furnishings, EPA counted products at the end-of-life (after primary use and reuse by secondary owners). Generation of furniture and furnishings in MSW was 12.1 million tons in 2018 (4.1 percent of total MSW), up from 2.2 million tons in 1960. Wood was the largest material category in furniture, and ferrous metals was the second largest category. Plastics, glass, textiles and other materials were also found in furniture. Although the recovery of wood, textiles and metals may be occurring, no measurable data source was accessible, with the exception of mattresses.

A significant proportion (19.5 percent) of furniture and furnishings was combusted for energy recovery in 2018, but the majority of this product sector was landfilled (80.1 percent).

The data in the table below are from 1960 to 2018, relating to the total number of tons of furniture and furnishings generated, recycled, composted, combusted with energy recovery and landfilled.

1960-2018 Data on Furniture and Furnishings in MSW by Weight (in thousands of U.S. tons)

Management Pathway	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017	2018
Generated	2,150	2,830	4,760	6,790	8,120	9,340	10,820	12,050	12,210	12,080
Recycled -	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10	40	40
Composted -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Combustion with Energy Recovery	-	-	90	1,150	1,570	1,700	1,910	2,350	2,380	2,360
Landfilled	2,150	2,830	4,670	5,640	6,550	7,640	8,900	9,690	9,790	9,680

Sources: Department of Commerce, International Sleep Products Association and Mattress Recycling Council.

*A dash in the table means that data is not available.

For more information on this topic, see the link below:

<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/durable-goods-product-specific-data#DurableGoodsOverview>