



ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TOWN OF SOMERS

OCTOBER 2026
NEWSLETTER

Watching Our Waste: Batteries, Bulbs, and Meds

By Jennifer Barker Kuskovski

Growing up, "Put it in file 13" was a common phrase around my house. My father was a Marine, and if you are familiar, you know that once a Marine, always a Marine. For civilians, File 13 is slang for the trash can, a term that dates back to World War II. For me, this means something needs to go, but exactly how remains unclear. Inevitably, I set it aside to deal with later.

These days, my personal File 13 is full of used batteries from remote controls and smoke detectors, a shoebox or two of burnt-out light bulbs, and a vanity drawer overflowing with expired medication. Decades back, I might have flushed the pills down the toilet, but today I know better. Sorta. All these odds and ends, I've filed away around the house until I could figure out exactly how to deal with them. Perhaps you have too?

Fortunately, our community offers several safe, accessible options for disposing of batteries, light bulbs, and medications.

For more answers on filing away your household refuse, stay tuned for future updates on clothing and textiles, routine household recycling, community-wide food waste & composting efforts, along with important document and shredded paper disposal—and more—from the Somers Energy & Environment Committee.

MEDICATION TAKE-BACK DAY

Safely dispose of old/unused medication, syringes and vapes.

Bring a non-perishable item for St. Luke's Food Pantry.

Saturday, October 24th 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Somers Police Station (100 Route 139)

SPONSORED BY SOMERS PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

BATTERIES



Improperly disposed batteries can cause fires and release harmful chemicals.

Alkaline

Staples in Yorktown Heights accepts them for free as part of their electronics recycling program. Please note that while federal regulations classify modern mercury-free alkaline batteries as safe for regular trash disposal, waste-to-energy facilities recover the melted metals from the ash post-incineration; bringing them to Staples is recommended as the most environmentally responsible option to reduce industrial waste.

Rechargeable

Somers Town House (large meeting room), Home Depot (Mohegan Lake), Lowe's (Yorktown Heights), or Staples all have designated drop boxes. New York State law prohibits throwing them in the trash because of their combustibility.

Button/Coin

Home Depot (Mohegan Lake), Lowe's (Yorktown Heights), or Staples all have designated drop boxes. Due to the likelihood of leftover charge, these batteries pose a chemical fire risk.

LIGHT BULBS



Improper disposal can release mercury and other heavy metals (lead, nickel, arsenic) or cause injury to sanitation workers.

Fluorescent

Bring to customer service/returns at Lowe's (Yorktown Heights) or Home Depot (Mohegan Lake).

LED

Staples (Yorktown Heights) accepts LEDs for recycling.

Incandescent & Halogen

These cannot be recycled due to the difficulty of separating glass from filaments. Wrap them to prevent shattering before placing them in the trash.

MEDICATIONS



Improper disposal can contaminate waterways and groundwater.

Somers Police Department (100 Route 139) maintains a medicine vault inside the front entrance.

Somers Pharmacy & Surgical (338 Route 202)

CVS Somers (325 Route 100)

A special note on needles, syringes, and sharps: the **Paramount at Somers Rehabilitation and Nursing Center** (189 Route 100) provides sharps disposal.

Checklist: Top Things to Pack in a Weather Emergency

☐ **Sturdy Bag**
Backpack, duffel, or rolling suitcase to pack all your essentials. Ideally, there should be room for a small tent.



☐ **Food & Water**
Enough for 3-5 days. Set up calendar alerts to check expiration dates and replenish your supply periodically.



☐ **Change of Clothes**
Socks, underwear, and a windbreaker or jacket for cooler nights.



☐ **First-Aid Kit & Important Medicine**
A first-aid kit and an N95 mask are critical. And don't forget your essential medications.



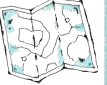
☐ **Flashlight**
To help you navigate at night and in low-light situations.



☐ **Portable Charger**
For recharging your phone and other devices. Go solar, if possible.



☐ **Waterproof Map**
Bring a map of your area in case you get lost or need to find a safe location in the event the power goes out.



☐ **Important Documents & Cash**
Birth certificates, Social Security cards, prescriptions, bank account info, and insurance documents. Keep some emergency cash in small bills.



Adapted from the Sierra Club's "Building Your Emergency Go Bag"

WHAT?

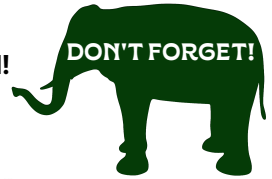
Somers Food Scraps Recycling Program

The Town of Somers has a food scraps recycling program and all food scraps are accepted!

8 a.m. - 4 p.m., 7 days a week

Somers Highway Department, 250 Route 100

DON'T FORGET!



Compost Your Food Scraps for a Healthier Planet

More than half of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills come from wasted food.



LANDFILL

Composting food scraps reduces emissions, and using compost helps build healthy soils.

Decreases Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Composting reduces methane emissions by keeping wasted food out of landfills. Applying compost to the soil reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, avoiding emissions from their manufacture and use.

Builds Flood & Drought Resilience

Compost enables soil to better absorb and hold water, helping to reduce erosion and flooding in heavy rains and retain water during droughts.

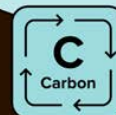
Sequesters Carbon

When we apply compost to the land, carbon is stored in the soil instead of being released into the atmosphere.

Enriches Soil

Compost enhances soil health and plant growth; it slowly releases and retains nutrients in the soil, reducing nutrient runoff and protecting water quality.

COMPOST



EPA, www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food. Accessed 29 Sept. 2026.

WHY?

HOW?



scan to learn more

*Wondering how to transport your food scraps? One option our neighbors in the know mentioned is AIRNEX's Collapsible Kitchen Counter Compost Bin, available online at retailers including Amazon, Walmart, and the AIRNEX website.**

*For informational purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement of any specific product or vendor.

The Somers Energy & Environment Committee aims to promote energy efficiency and environmental initiatives. For more information, contact Denise Schirmer at dschirmer@somersny.gov.