

REPORT 2025

Swedish Waste Management

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Avfall Sverige

Baltzarsgatan 25 | 211 36 Malmö | 040-35 66 00
info@avfallsverige.se | www.avfallsverige.se

Swedish waste management is facing major changes

Waste management in Sweden is undergoing a period of major change. Over recent decades, we have taken important steps towards a more sustainable and resource-efficient approach to household waste management – moving away from landfilling large volumes of waste to the well-developed infrastructure we have today for collection, material recycling and energy recovery. Waste management is also an important element of society's security of supply and helps to ensure access to waste management services, raw materials and energy, even during disruptions and crises.



At the same time, we are facing the next stage of the transition. The main focus is not on developing waste management itself. It is about preventing waste from being generated, using products longer and creating functioning markets for recycled materials. Only then can we take the next step in the transition to a circular economy.

The aim of this report is to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of the state of Swedish waste management in 2025, with a particular focus on household waste. It presents trends in waste volumes, how waste is treated, how far we have progressed in relation to national and European targets, and the challenges and opportunities that characterise the system. By highlighting both progress and problems, we aim to provide a fact-based foundation for municipalities, decision-makers, producers and other actors, all of whom have a role to play in shaping the waste management system of the future.

The statistics show that the volume of household waste is decreasing – but slowly. Residual waste accounts for a large proportion of household waste, which indicates that there is still potential to increase the sorting of materials that can be recycled. We can also see that there is a lack of necessary policy instruments and that, in many cases, the markets for recycled materials are too weak to drive development in the desired direction. This is a key challenge if Sweden is to be able to raise its recycling rates and meet the EU's new targets and forthcoming regulations.

The municipalities, which are responsible for collecting and treating household waste, continue to develop their systems through measures such as kerbside collection and increased sorting. At the same time, demands are increasing, both from legislation and from citizens who expect a high standard of service and sustainable solutions. This affects the costs of waste management.

With new EU initiatives, increased requirements for traceability and design, and a growing focus on reuse and waste prevention, the prospects for achieving a more circular economy are being strengthened. Avfall Sverige welcomes this. To succeed, all actors must take responsibility – from producers and municipalities to businesses and households.

We hope that this report will contribute to a greater understanding, provide a better basis for decision-making and foster in-depth discussions on how Sweden can continue to develop world-class waste management that strengthens Sweden's preparedness and self-sufficiency, while ensuring that resources are put to good use, climate impact is reduced and benefits to society are enhanced.

Malmö, August 2026

Tony Clark,
Managing Director of Avfall Sverige

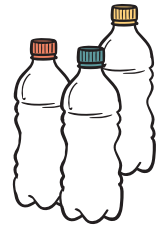
2025 in figures

Textile collection increased by **59%** compared with 2024



Residual waste has decreased by **23%** over the last ten years

The volume of plastic packaging has increased by **52%** over the last ten years



1.5 million apartments are heated using energy recovered from waste

3 out of 4 recycling centres accept items for reuse



Each person generated 424 kg of household waste

Source: Avfall Web, unless otherwise stated.

Waste volumes and treatment

Waste volumes are decreasing – but progress is too slow

Household waste is the waste that is mainly generated in the home when we have cooked, tidied up the closet, sorted through our clothes and cleaned. It accounts for around one fifth of all waste in Sweden, excluding mining waste, and includes, among other things, packaging, food scraps and residual waste, as well as bulky and garden waste. It also includes waste from businesses that is similar to that generated in households, such as from restaurants and offices.

The long-term trend indicates a decrease in the total volume of household waste. Over the last ten years, the total volume has fallen by 9 percent, amounting to 4.5 million tonnes in 2025.

The decrease is even greater when calculated per person – 14 percent over the same period. Thus, on average, each individual inhabitant generates less waste than before, but population growth is offsetting the effect on total volumes.

At the same time, levels remain high and the decrease is not happening quickly enough. The decrease in recent years occurred during a pandemic and an economic downturn, where reduced consumption often leads to less waste. Thus, the decrease does not necessarily reflect a lasting shift.



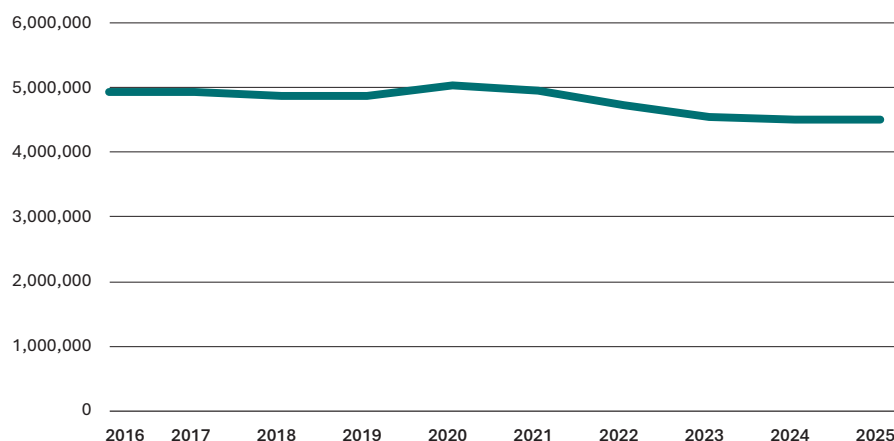
In 2025, each person in Sweden generated 424 kg of household waste, which is lower than the EU average (517 kg per capita, 2024).

Source: Eurostat.

WHAT COUNTS AS HOUSEHOLD WASTE?

In this report, the term household waste refers to the waste generated by households and businesses that falls under municipal waste responsibility pursuant to Chapter 15, § 12 of the Swedish Environmental Code. Compared with the concept of municipal waste, construction and demolition waste from households is included, while waste from park and street maintenance is not included.

FIGURE 1. Total volumes of household waste in tonnes, 2016–2025.



The waste hierarchy – from landfill to prevention

The best waste is the waste that is never produced. This is the underlying principle of the waste hierarchy, which has been incorporated into both Swedish and European legislation and sets out a clear order of priority for waste management.

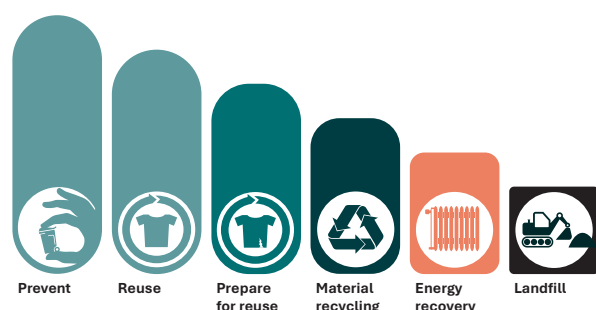


FIGURE 2. Waste hierarchy

Over the years, Sweden has made significant progress up the hierarchy. A few decades ago, landfill was the dominant form of waste treatment, but bans on landfilling combustible and organic waste drove a rapid shift towards energy recovery. As a result, landfill has fallen

by 95 percent since 1975 and now accounts for just 1.5 percent of treated household waste. The ongoing trend involves a shift within the waste hierarchy – from energy recovery to a greater emphasis on prevention, reuse and material recycling. The main need of this transition is not greater treatment capacity. It is policy instruments, business models and market conditions that make it more attractive to prevent waste, reuse products and use recycled materials.

NEW EU LAW TO ACCELERATE THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION

The European Commission plans to present the Circular Economy Act in 2026. The aim is to boost circular flows in the EU by creating a more unified single market for secondary raw materials: stronger demand for recycled materials and, consequently, better access to high-quality materials.

THREE SPECIFIC CHANGES THAT MAY COME INTO EFFECT:

- 1. Greater producer responsibility** across more product groups, such as textiles.
- 2. Stricter design requirements** to make goods easier to reuse, repair and recycle.
- 3. Increased traceability throughout the value chain** to facilitate the reuse and recycling of materials.

FIGURE 3. Volumes of household waste treated in Sweden 1975–2025. Tonnes.

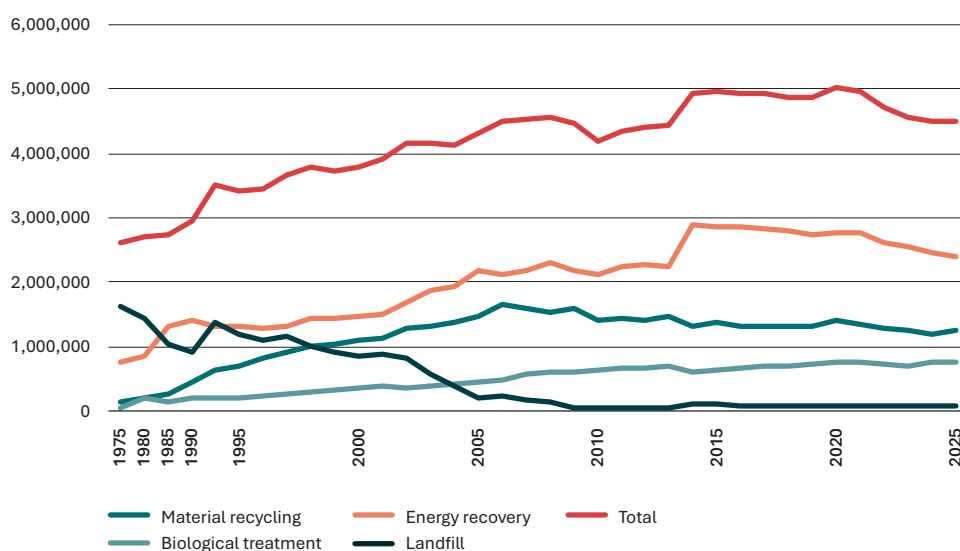


FIGURE 4. Breakdown of household waste collected 2025.

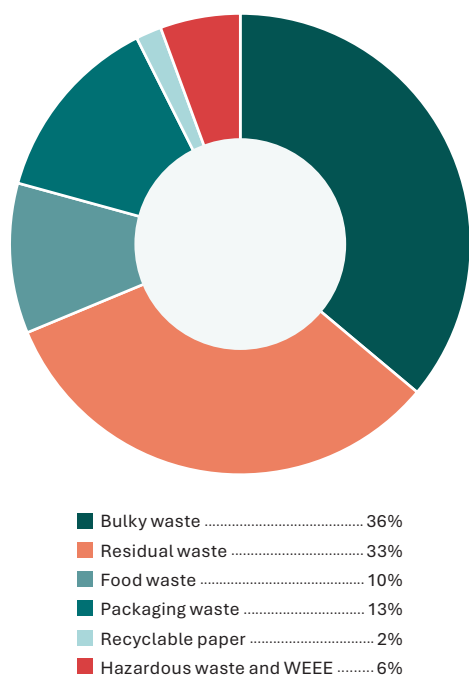
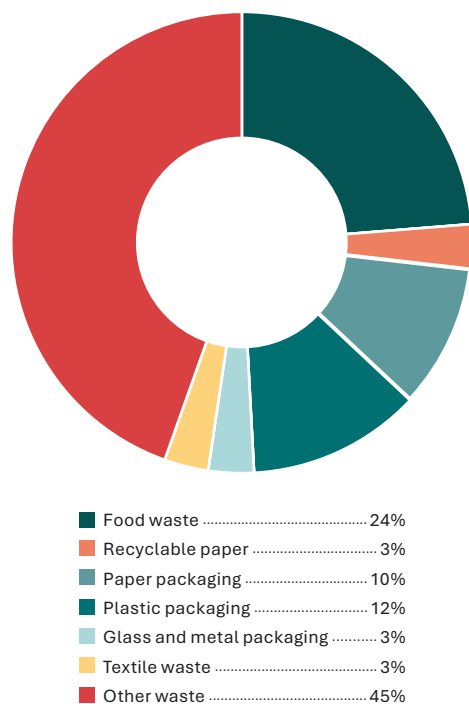


FIGURE 5. Breakdown of what is disposed of as residual waste.



Source: Memorandum No 1 2025. Summary of waste composition analysis results in Avfall Web 2021–2023, Avfall Sverige.

Residual waste accounts for a third of all household waste

Household waste consists of approximately one third residual waste and one third bulky waste. The remaining third is made up of packaging waste, food waste, recyclable paper and hazardous waste.

Residual waste, i.e. the waste that ends up in your rubbish bag, is sent for energy recovery. Although the volume of residual waste has fallen by 23 percent since 2016, the level is still too high.

There is significant potential here for increasing the sorting of waste that can be recycled.

Bulky waste includes furniture, carpets, plastic sledges and other items that are too large or unsuitable for disposal as residual waste.

Half of what ends up in residual waste is food and packaging

Despite improved services and greater public awareness, large quantities of unsorted waste still end up in the residual waste stream. Just over half of residual waste

is made up of materials that actually belong in other fractions. In particular, large volumes of food waste and packaging waste are disposed of there instead of in the appropriate recycling bins.

Incorrectly sorted food waste accounts for just under one fourth of residual waste.

In addition, residual waste consists of 12 percent plastic packaging and 10 percent paper packaging. There is significant potential here to reduce both climate impact and costs by encouraging households to sort food waste, packaging waste and other materials for material recycling. Stricter sorting requirements, improved service and a well-designed producer responsibility scheme are also expected to deliver greater climate and resource benefits than further efficiency improvements in the treatment stage.

THE EU's 60% TARGET: HOW IS SWEDEN FARING?

The EU has set a binding target that 60 percent of municipal waste must be prepared for reuse or recycled by 2030.

Across the EU, the material recycling rate currently stands at 47.7 percent, but there are significant differences between countries. Germany has the highest rate at 69 percent, while Romania has the lowest at 12 percent. Sweden stands at 39 percent, which is below the EU average, placing us 17th out of 27. Sweden's ranking shows that well-developed collection systems alone are not enough. To increase material recycling, more waste must also be separated from residual waste, and there must be demand for recycled materials so that they are used in new products.

Source: EEA/Eurostat, data for 2023.

VOLUNTARY TARGET: 25% LESS FOOD AND RESIDUAL WASTE IN 10 YEARS

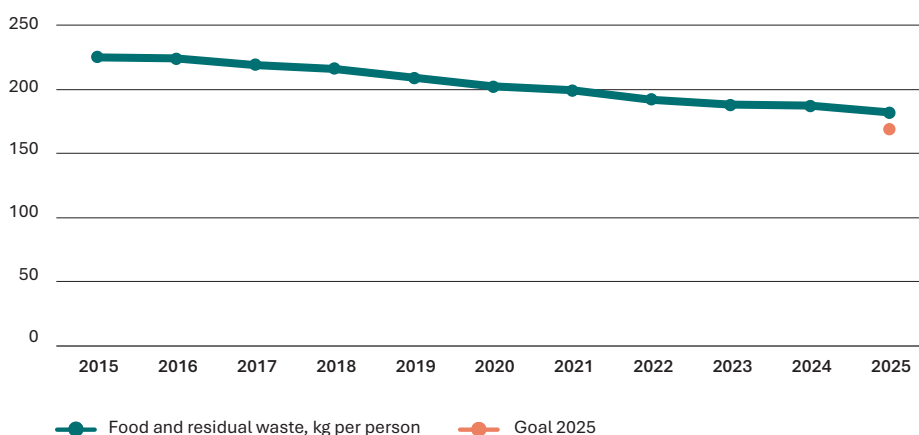
Avfall Sverige's 25/25 goal was intended to reduce the amount of food and residual waste per person by 25 percent between 2015 and 2025. The 2025 final report shows that significant progress was made but that the target was not fully achieved. In 2025, food and residual waste amounted to 182 kg per person, representing a reduction of just over 19 percent since 2015.

IN 2025, AVFALL SVERIGE ADOPTED A NEW TARGET:

By 2030, residual waste is to have been reduced by 30 percent compared with the base year 2023 – referred to as the 30/30 goal. Efforts from the municipalities, households and businesses alike are required to meet the 30/30 goal.



FIGURE 6. Food and residual waste per person – progress towards the 25/25 goal.



Slight increase in material recycling

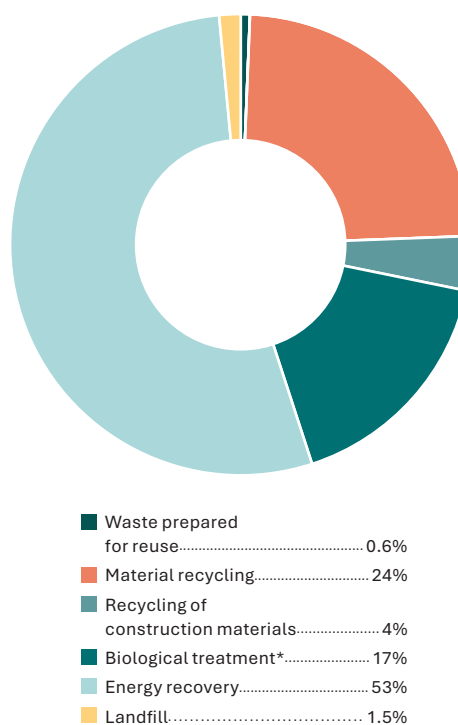
In 2025, 54 percent of all household waste collected was treated through energy recovery, making it the most common form of household waste treatment.

The second most common form is material recycling, followed by biological treatment. Together, these treatment forms accounted for 41 percent of the household waste collected. In addition, 4 percent of household waste was recycled as construction materials for building and civil engineering projects.

A major obstacle to achieving increased material recycling is that the market for recycled materials is weak. Demand and willingness to pay are often too low to make material recycling profitable. This is particularly true of plastic, as recycled raw materials cannot compete on price with new fossil-based plastic.

Landfilling is the least widely used treatment method, with only 1.5 percent of household waste being sent to landfill.

FIGURE 7. Household waste treatment methods 2025.



*Includes home-composted food waste, but not home-composted garden waste.



Responsibility and costs

Four actors are responsible for the waste

1. Municipalities

Sweden's municipalities are responsible for the collection and treatment of municipal waste. This includes household waste and waste from businesses which, by law, falls under municipal waste responsibility.

The municipalities may choose to carry out the work themselves or to contract out the services. 60 percent of Sweden's municipalities have chosen to contract out the collection of food waste and residual waste to private contractors, while 40 percent manage the collection themselves.

NEW RULES MAKE IT HARDER FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The Government has passed a new act on public sales activities and stricter competition measures: the Act on Public Commercial Activities (2026:578). Avfall Sverige argues that the rules are difficult to apply in practice and that they may lead to the disappearance of certain municipal services. This, in turn, could have consequences for innovation, preparedness and service provision, all of which contribute to an effective waste management system. The Act also introduces a market disruption fine of up to SEK 20 million, with decisions on such fines able to be issued within five years of the violation ceasing. The new rules came into force on 1 August 2026.

2. Producers

In Sweden, producers are responsible for, among other things, packaging, electronic waste, tyres, cars, batteries, fishing gear and medicines. This means that companies that manufacture and sell products are responsible for funding the collection and material recycling – or other treatment – of this packaging and these products once they have become waste. Producer responsibility is intended to encourage manufacturers to reduce the amount of waste and develop products that are easier to recycle.

3. Businesses and other organisations

Businesses and other organisations are obliged to sort their waste, including textiles, and dispose of it in the correct collection system. They are responsible for disposing of any waste that does not fall under municipal or producer responsibility. On 1 July 2026, the retail sector assumed full responsibility for all its municipal waste, and all businesses became responsible for their cooking oil and their office and recyclable paper.

4. Households

Households are obliged to sort their waste and dispose of it in the correct collection system. From 2025, households must sort textile waste and dispose of it as a separate fraction at a recycling centre or the like. For apartment blocks, property owners are obliged to ensure that households can dispose of their sorted waste.



6.80 SEK PER DAY

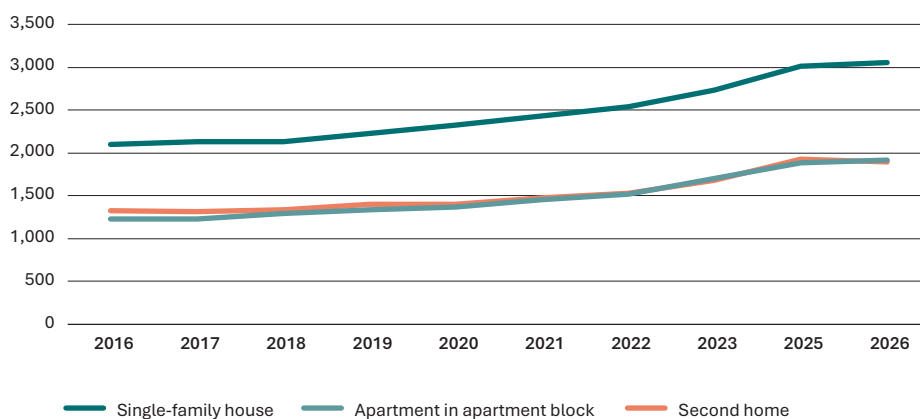
**SWEDISH HOUSEHOLDS PAY
ROUGHLY THE PRICE OF AN APPLE
FOR THEIR WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Inflation and rising demands are driving up costs

The waste charge funds the municipalities' work to collect and treat household waste. The charge is intended to cover the entire process – from collection, recycling centres, transport and treatment to customer service, communication initiatives and administration. On average, a Swedish household pays SEK 6.80 per day for these services, but rates vary between municipalities and types of housing.

Over the past ten years, waste charges have risen on average by around 42 percent for apartment blocks, 46 percent for single-family houses and 53 percent for second (holiday) homes. The increase is due to several factors, including higher costs for fuel, contracted services and treatment, as well as new legal requirements, improved service levels and investments in a more circular system. At the same time, compensation from producers helps to keep charges down. Factors such as expanded sorting schemes, new collection solutions and adaptation to new regulations have influenced cost trends.

FIGURE 8. Average waste charges per household and year (SEK, incl. VAT) 2016–2026.
No data is available for 2024 due to a change in reporting method.



Prevention and reuse

The best waste is the waste that is never produced. That is why the first step in the waste hierarchy is to prevent waste from being generated and to use products for as long as possible.

Municipalities should inform their residents about how they can reduce their waste, and many municipalities have also launched initiatives to make this easier for them, such as workshops where people can borrow tools or sewing machines to repair items and clothes, and partnerships with “recreation banks” where sports equipment can be borrowed free of charge.

An increasing number of municipalities are also working to facilitate the reuse of products and materials. This may involve circulating second-hand furniture and furnishings within the municipality or developing ways to reuse second-hand building materials. Many municipalities also have “give and take” corners where products can find new owners. These initiatives help ensure that products are used longer, but at the same time often make it difficult to track exactly how much is reused and thus avoided becoming waste.

Significant gap between giving and buying second-hand

One challenge is that, while households are very keen to pass things on, the demand for second-hand goods is considerably lower. 84 percent of households state that it

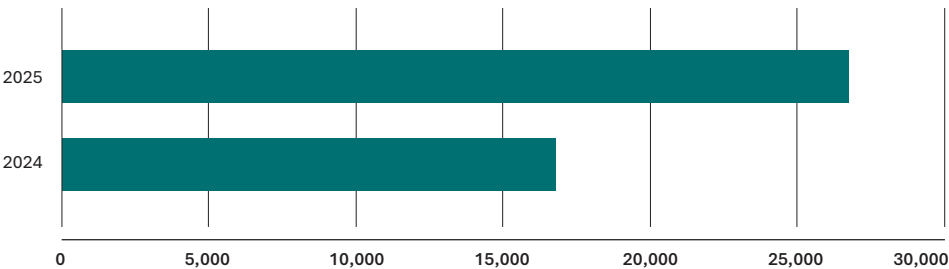
is quite or very likely that they would turn in used items for reuse, while only 55 percent state that it is quite or very likely that they would buy items second hand. To increase reuse, both simple collection schemes and measures to boost demand for second-hand goods are required.

More than half of the textiles collected are reused

How collected clothes and other textiles can be handled depends on their quality and condition, as well as on sorting capacity, recycling technology and the demand for second-hand textiles and recycled raw materials. In 2025, 55 percent of the textiles collected were reused, 20 percent were sent for material recycling and 25 percent were sent for energy recovery.

The fact that the majority is reused is positive, as extending the lifespan of textiles is the most resource-efficient way to utilise them. At the same time, there is a lack of large-scale material recycling for textile waste that is in too poor a condition to be reused, which means that too large a proportion goes to energy recovery instead of being turned into new products.

FIGURE 9. Volumes of textile waste collected, 2024 and 2025, tonnes.





NEW PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEXTILES

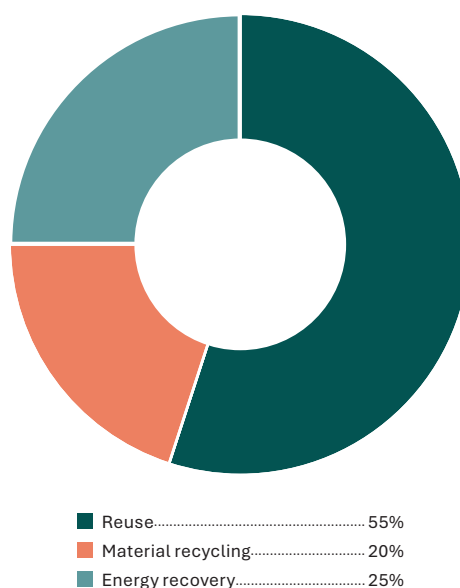
- A producer responsibility scheme for textiles is to be introduced in all EU Member States by April 2028 at the latest.
- This means that textile producers will have a clearer responsibility for financing and developing systems for collection, sorting and recycling.
- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is investigating how the system should be structured in Sweden and is due to report on its findings in November 2026.

To create more circular textile flows, new EU legislation is in the works, including producer responsibility for textiles. The aim is to place greater responsibility on producers for the entire life cycle of textiles – from design and choice of materials to collection, sorting and treatment – and to create financial incentives that strengthen the market for reused and recycled materials.

Textile collection rose sharply after new requirements were introduced

Today's large volumes of textile waste reflect unsustainable consumption characterised by short lifespans, high volumes and garments that are often thrown away rather than repaired or reused. The volumes collected increased by 59 percent between 2024 and 2025, a trend that can be linked to the requirement for separate sorting and collection introduced on 1 January 2025.

FIGURE 10. How collected textiles were treated, 2025.



To manage the increased volumes, the Government introduced exemptions in autumn 2025 for heavily soiled or damaged textiles, which may now be disposed of with residual waste. This has helped to achieve a better balance in collection, but at the same time there remains a need for measures to extend the lifespan of textiles and reduce the influx into the waste stream.

52%

Textiles account for 52 percent of the items prepared for reuse, followed by furniture, household goods, and sports and leisure items. Waste from construction and demolition accounts for only 3 percent.



Preparation for reuse

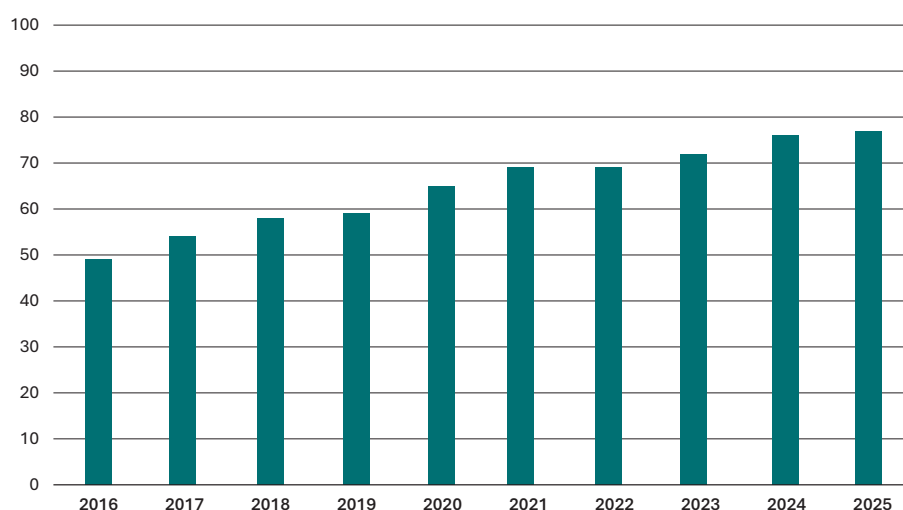
When products do end up as waste, the next step is to prepare them for reuse. This involves salvaging clothing, furniture and other items that are disposed of as waste. In practice, this can be achieved through sorting, checking that items are in working order, cleaning and carrying out simple repairs before they can be put to reuse. A growing number of recycling centres are focusing on this stage of the waste hierarchy, which extends the lifespan of products and reduces the need for new production.

Many municipalities are currently developing solutions to salvage products that have been disposed of as waste but can be reused. This can be achieved through recycling centres having their own reuse operations, collaboration with non-profit organisations and social enterprises, or by creating places where residents can turn in and collect products. One challenge is tracking the volume of items that are actually reused, as the flows often involve several different organisations.

Three out of four recycling centres accept items for reuse

Recycling centres play a vital role in the reuse of furniture, textiles and other items turned in for reuse or preparation for reuse. There are currently 586 recycling centres in Sweden, and 77 percent of them allow residents to turn in waste for reuse. This represents a 57 percent increase over ten years and shows that preparation for reuse is increasingly becoming an established part of municipal services.

FIGURE 11. Proportion of recycling centres that accept waste for reuse, 2016–2025.



Material recycling

For waste that cannot be prevented, reused or prepared for reuse, material recycling is the next step in the waste hierarchy.

When materials can be recycled and turned into new products, the need for virgin raw materials is reduced, while energy consumption is often lower than in new production. This allows better use to be made of resources that already exist in society.

In 2025, 24 percent of all household waste collected was dealt with through material recycling. This figure includes packaging waste, recyclable paper, bulky waste and electronic waste. In addition, 4 percent of household waste was recycled as construction materials for building and civil engineering projects. On top of this comes the biological treatment of food waste and garden waste, which is also a form of material recycling (see more below).

Packaging volumes on the rise – plastic and cardboard stand out

The volume of packaging collected has risen by 24 percent over the last ten years, but there are significant differences between different types of packaging. Paper and plastic packaging are the materials driving the increase, up 64 and 52 percent, respectively, over the period. In 2025 alone, paper packaging collection increased by 8 percent and plastic packaging collection by 6 percent. The increase reflects, among other things, changing consumption patterns, with the rise of

e-commerce and more home deliveries generating large quantities of single-use packaging.

Although the increase in material recycling is significant, 22 percent of household residual waste consists of paper and plastic packaging. There is therefore considerable potential to further increase the sorting of these materials.

In contrast, the volume of recyclable paper recycled has fallen by 70 percent over the past ten years, keeping pace with digitalisation and a decline in print newspaper circulation.

**31
PERCENT**

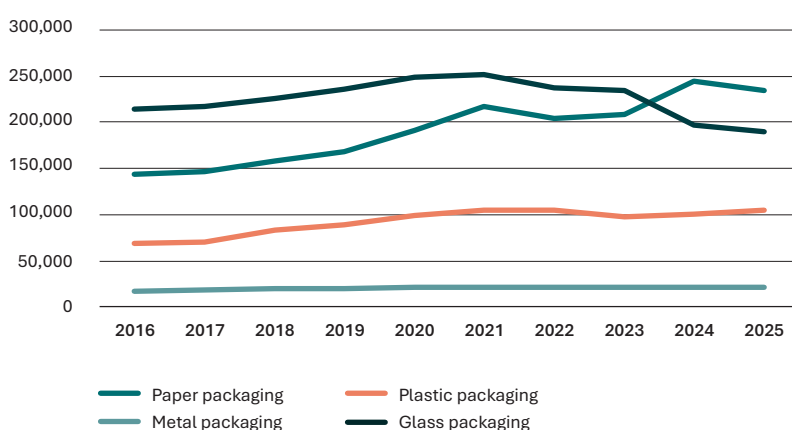
31% of all plastic packaging placed on the market is recycled. This represents a significant shortfall compared with Sweden's target of 50% by 2029.

Source: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

550,440 TONNES

550,440 tonnes of packaging were collected in 2025, representing an increase of 2.7 percent since 2024 (excluding styrofoam, corrugated cardboard, wood, ceramic and textile packaging).

FIGURE 12. Volume of packaging waste collected, tonnes, 2016–2025.



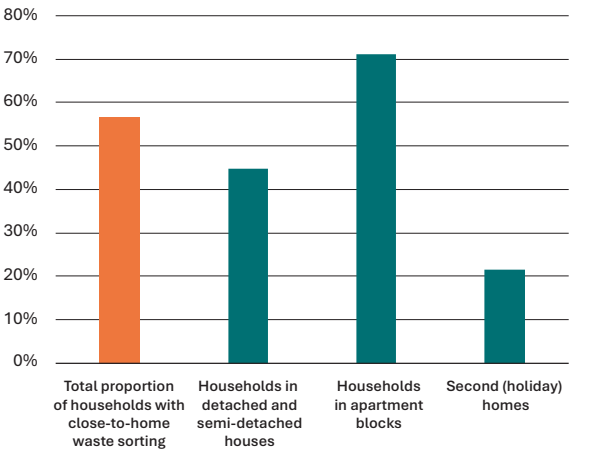
Residual waste cut in half in many areas thanks to close-to-home waste sorting

Producer responsibility for packaging has been in place since 1994, but collection via recycling stations has not been sufficient for Sweden to meet the EU’s material recycling targets. To meet these targets, Sweden (like many other EU countries) has decided to expand kerbside collection (also known as close-to-home waste sorting) so that households can sort their waste close to where they live.

By 2025, more than half of all Swedish households were able to dispose of packaging close to their homes. At the same time, access to kerbside collection of packaging varies between different types of housing. Apartment blocks lead the way, with just over 70 percent of households able to sort their waste close to home. Here, cooperation between municipalities and property owners, as well as dialogue between property managers and residents, is crucial for effective waste sorting. For households in detached and semi-detached houses, the corresponding figure is 45 percent. Second (holiday) homes lag furthest behind, with around 22 percent having access to close-to-home waste sorting.

Experiences from areas where close-to-home waste sorting has been introduced are very positive. In many areas, the volume of residual waste has fallen sharply, sometimes by as much as half. 86 percent of households state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the collection service.

FIGURE 13. Proportion of households in each household type that practise close-to-home waste sorting, 2025.



CLOSE-TO-HOME WASTE SORTING

With close-to-home waste sorting, households are supposed to be able to dispose of their packaging within 400 metres of their home, for example on their own property, in recycling rooms, adjacent to their property or at a nearby collection point.

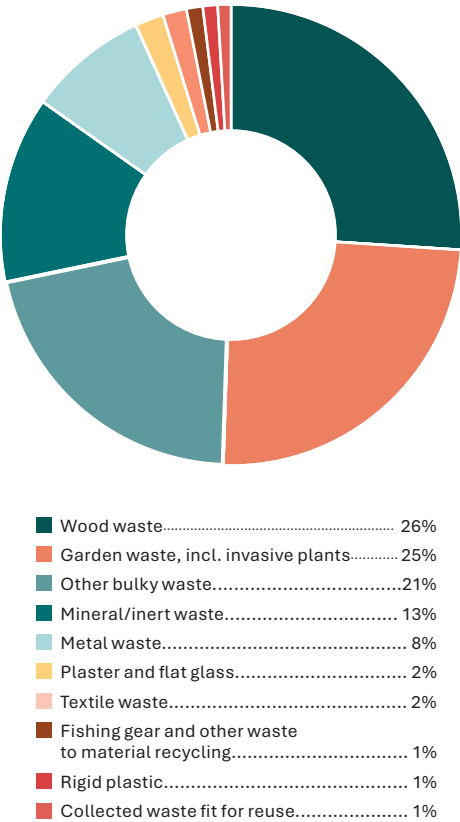
Close-to-home waste sorting for paper, plastic, glass and metal packaging must be introduced throughout the country by 1 January 2027 at the latest. The requirements for close-to-home waste sorting also apply to food waste and residual waste.

Declining volumes of bulky waste following the peak of the pandemic

Bulky waste is waste that is too large or unsuitable to be disposed of as residual waste, and the volumes are often influenced by the state of the economy. When consumption and home renovations increase, bulky waste tends to do the same. This was clearly evident during the pandemic years; volumes peaked in 2020 when many people were at home, carrying out renovations and buying new items. The trend has since reversed, with bulky waste totalling 1.6 million tonnes in 2025 – a 16 percent decrease from the peak.

In 2025, bulky waste consisted mainly of wood waste and garden waste, which together accounted for 51 percent.

FIGURE 14. Breakdown of bulky waste into different fractions, 2025.



In 2025, 61 percent of bulky waste was treated through energy recovery, 31 percent went to material recycling – including construction materials for civil engineering purposes – and 5 percent was sent to landfill. This shows that bulky waste still needs to move up the waste hierarchy. One positive trend is that more municipalities are expanding their efforts to prepare waste for reuse. Although the proportion is low – only 3 percent of bulky waste is currently treated in this way, including textile waste – there is great potential to increase this proportion in the future.

More municipalities are collecting rigid plastic

More materials are being sorted into separate fractions from bulky waste. A clear trend is that more municipalities are collecting rigid plastic as a separate fraction – rising from 72 municipalities in 2016 to 171 municipalities in 2025. During the same period, the volumes of rigid plastic collected rose from 11,040 tonnes to 16,680 tonnes, an increase of 51 percent. This shows that municipal systems and services have a significant impact on behaviour and recycling rates. However, the disposal of the rigid plastic that is collected remains a challenge.

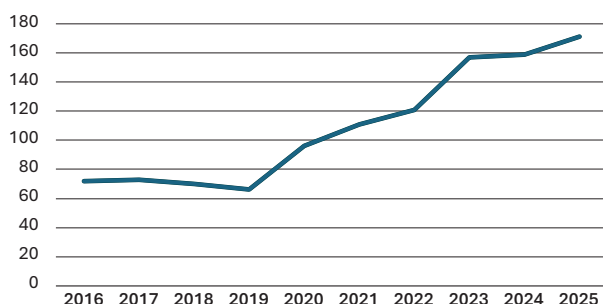


FIGURE 15. Number of municipalities that collect rigid plastic, 2016–2025.

8.5 KG OF HAZARDOUS WASTE PER PERSON

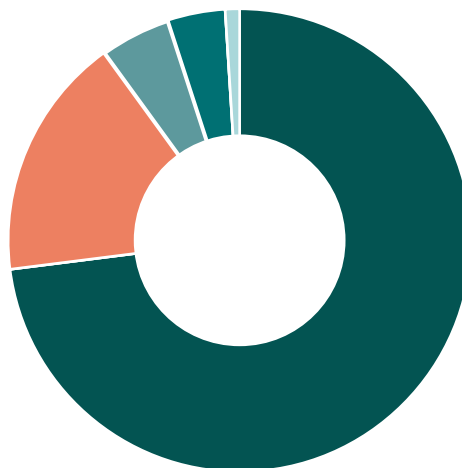
Hazardous waste from households includes, among other things, impregnated wood, asbestos and chemicals such as pesticides, paint and cleaning products.

In 2025, municipalities collected 89,670 tonnes of hazardous waste, which equates to 8.5 kg per person. Impregnated wood accounts for almost 70 percent of the hazardous waste.

ELECTRONIC WASTE – 73% WAS SENT FOR MATERIAL RECYCLING

Electronic waste contains, among other things, iron, copper and aluminium, which can be recycled and turned into new products.

In 2025, 149,600 tonnes of electronic waste were collected, and 73 percent was sent for material recycling. In addition, municipalities collected 5,150 tonnes of portable and built-in batteries and 6,200 tonnes of lead-acid batteries in 2025.

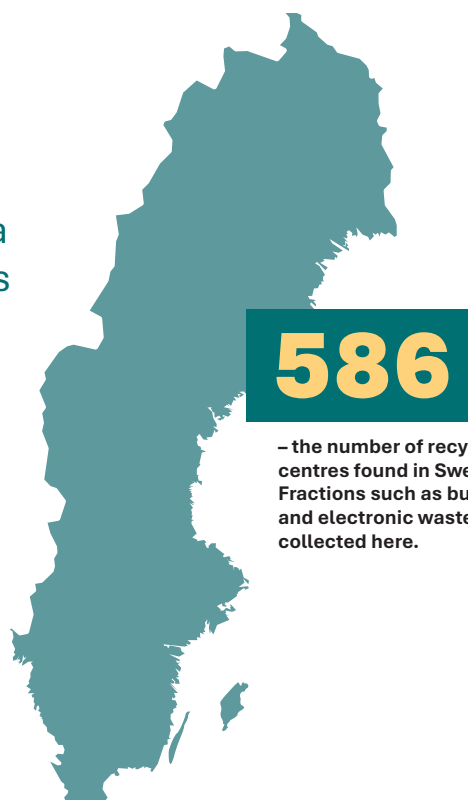


Material recycling.....	73%
Energy recovery.....	17%
Construction materials.....	5%
Landfill.....	4%
Reuse.....	1%

FIGURE 16. Treatment of electronic waste collected, 2025. Source: EL-Kretsen and Recipo.

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Why isn't material recycling increasing at a faster rate? Collection and sorting systems are being expanded across the country. At the same time, demand for recycled materials is often too low to drive this development. To achieve future targets, we need both better sorting and policy instruments that boost the market for recycled materials.





Biological treatment

Biological treatment is when food waste and other biowaste are treated in a manner that enables nutrients to be recovered and, in some cases, converted into energy. Separated food waste is mainly treated through anaerobic digestion, which produces both biofertiliser and biogas. Biofertiliser returns plant nutrients to agriculture, while biogas can replace fossil fuels. Other biowaste, such as garden waste, is composted and turned into compost or landscaping soil. In 2025, 17 percent of all household waste collected was dealt with through biological treatment.

31 percent more food waste is collected, but there is still significant potential

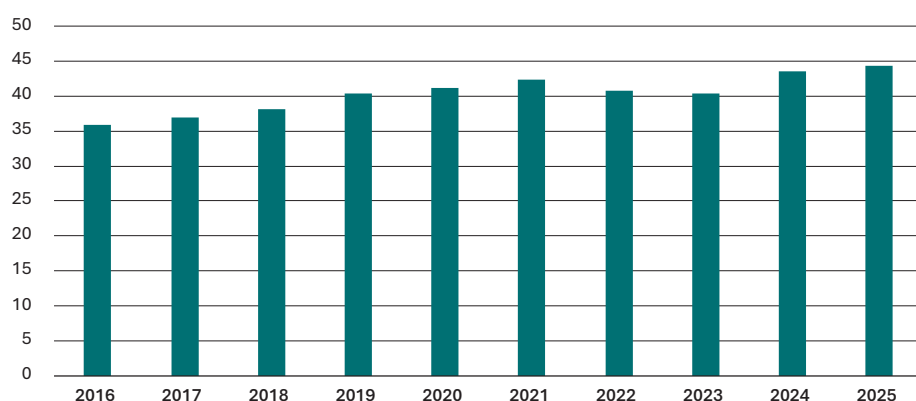
Between 2016 and 2025, the volume of food waste collected rose from 360,000 to 470,000 tonnes, an increase of 31 percent. As of 2024, the separation of food waste is mandatory for households and businesses. However, the significant increases had already taken place before the requirement was introduced. This shows that the municipalities have taken the lead with collection systems and information campaigns that make it easier for households to separate food waste.

Despite this positive trend, the level of separation is still insufficient. Waste composition analyses show that around 24 percent of residual waste consists of food waste that could be separated. Even though separation is mandatory, continued efforts are needed to bring about behavioural changes so that even more food waste is separated and can be converted into biogas and biofertiliser. This applies both at home and in the workplace.

Biogas and biofertiliser not only help to reduce climate impact but also strengthen society's security of supply by replacing imported fossil fuels and mineral fertilisers.



FIGURE 17. Volumes of food waste collected, 2016–2025, kg per person.



Electrification poses a challenge to the biogas market

In 2025, a total of 256,000 MWh of fossil-free vehicle gas was produced thanks to the collection of food waste. For food waste collection to deliver its full environmental and societal benefits and to support the transition to a fossil-free transport system, there must be functioning markets for biogas.

As the vehicle fleet becomes electrified, the role of biogas in the transport system and in other areas must be safeguarded and provided with long-term regulatory frameworks. Municipalities can contribute by requiring biogas-powered vehicles when procuring public transport, transport services for people with disabilities and other municipal transport services.

One fifth of all biofertiliser comes from food waste

In 2025, just over 2.2 million tonnes of biofertiliser were produced in Sweden, 20 percent of which was generated from food waste collected by the municipalities. Biofertiliser contributes to a more resource-efficient cycle and can strengthen Sweden's self-sufficiency by returning locally produced plant nutrients to agriculture and reducing the need for imported inputs such as mineral fertilisers and phosphorus. For the nutrients to be usable, the food waste must be of high quality and free from, among other things, plastic and other incorrectly sorted materials.

To ensure high quality and demand from the agricultural sector, there is a regulatory framework for quality-assured biofertiliser and compost – Certified Recycling – which is well-established in Sweden and facilitates its use on arable land. The framework is owned by Avfall Sverige and is managed and developed by a steering committee with representatives from the research and business communities.

DIFFERENT ROUTES FOR FOOD WASTE – CO-DIGESTION DOMINATES

The most common practice is for collected food waste to be sent to a co-digestion plant, where it is digested together with other organic materials to produce both biofertiliser and biogas. A smaller proportion is sent for composting and turned into landscaping soil. Food waste can also be digested at wastewater treatment plants. There are 35 co-digestion plants in Sweden, of which 28 process food waste and one composts food waste; see Appendix 1.



Energy recovery

Energy recovery is an important part of the Swedish waste management system. When waste cannot or should not be reused or recycled, its energy content is recovered while the waste is decontaminated and treated in a controlled manner. Energy recovery contributes to both district heating and electricity. The residual products can also be utilised. For example, metals and other materials can be recovered from slag and ash, which further increases resource efficiency. In 2025, 54 percent of all household waste collected was dealt with through energy recovery.

23 percent less household waste sent for energy recovery

The volume of household waste sent for energy recovery has fallen by 23 percent over the last ten years, dropping by 8 percent between 2024 and 2025 alone. A key reason for this is that a larger proportion of waste is being sorted and managed at higher levels in the waste hierarchy.

At the same time, business waste sent for energy recovery has increased by 12 percent over the last ten years. This trend shows that measures to reduce waste volumes and increase sorting need to reach more actors than just households.

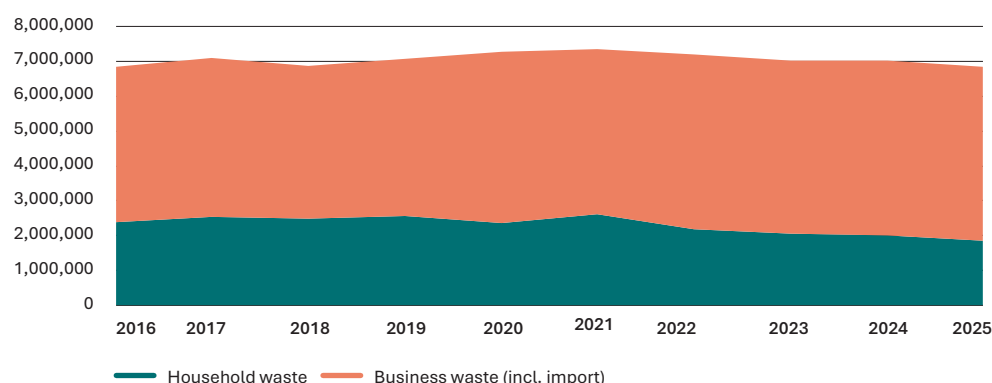
Sweden also takes in waste from other European countries for energy recovery when the waste cannot or should not be recycled and might otherwise end up in landfill. This treatment is carried out in return for payment and represents a waste management service provided to other countries. In 2025, imported waste accounted for 41 percent of the total volume sent for energy recovery.

Energy recovery's importance to Sweden's security of supply is growing

Energy recovery provides both district heating and electricity to Swedish households and businesses. In 2025, a total of 20.5 TWh of energy was produced, representing an increase of 2.8 percent compared with 2024. This corresponds to the heating needs of just over 1,470,000 apartments and the electricity needs of just over 940,000 apartments. Sweden recovers more energy per tonne of waste than any other country in Europe, approximately 3 MWh per tonne.

Heat production continues to account for the vast majority – 88 percent – of total waste-to-energy production. In 2025, this amounted to 18 TWh. Heat recovery from waste plays a vital role in the district heating networks of Swedish cities and built-up areas, and is a key component of Sweden's energy security.

FIGURE 18. Volume of waste sent to energy recovery at Swedish waste incineration plants, 2016–2025, tonnes.



Electricity production totalled 2.5 TWh in 2025, which is an increase of 8 percent compared to the previous year. Over time, electricity production has risen significantly – it was 16 percent higher than ten years earlier. Energy recovery thus contributes to important resource recovery by extracting energy from waste that cannot or should not be recycled as material, while also contributing to the Swedish energy system.

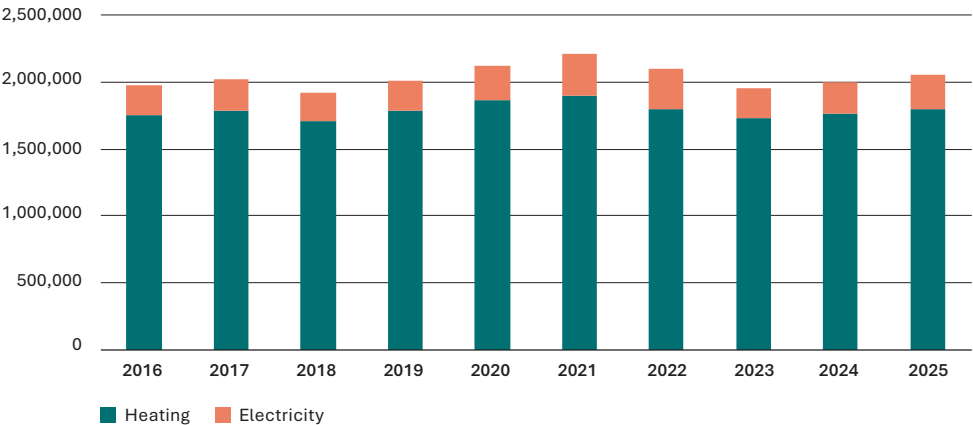
A level playing field and new technology are key to the climate transition

A key challenge for energy recovery is the fossil emissions generated by waste incineration. Over 90 percent of these emissions from the sector are estimated to come from plastic waste, which is currently almost exclusively based on fossil raw materials. This leads to significant greenhouse gas emissions – but also to substantial costs.

In addition to the plants paying for emission allowances, the Government pays a levy to the EU for plastic packaging that is not sorted and recycled. In 2024, this fee amounted to SEK 2.7 billion. Since its introduction in 2021, Sweden has paid a total of SEK 6.1 billion in plastic levies, a substantial cost which, in practice, is borne by the Swedish public. To reduce costs and increase material recycling, policy instruments are needed that provide producers with incentives to prevent plastic waste and choose more recyclable materials. However, new policy instruments and new technology will also be required.

Part of the solution lies in ensuring a level playing field within the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). At present, only Denmark, Lithuania and Sweden include their waste incineration plants in the trading scheme. The European Commission has indicated that plants in all countries may be included from 2030. This is crucial in order to ensure a level playing field.

FIGURE 19. Energy production from waste, 2016–2025, MWh.



1.5 MILLION

A well-developed district heating network makes it possible to heat 1.5 million apartments using energy recovered from waste.

THE PLANTS THAT PRODUCED THE MOST HEAT IN 2025

36 plants that are members of Avfall Sverige recover energy from waste; see also Appendix 2. The vast majority produce both heat and electricity, but heat accounts for the largest proportion. The ten plants that produced the most heat in 2025:

1. Högdalenverket, Stockholm
2. Västerås Kraftvärmeverk, Västerås
3. Sävenäs avfallskraftvärmeverk, Gothenburg
4. Sysav förbränningsanläggning, Malmö
5. Gärsdaverket, Linköping
6. Söderenergi, Södertälje
7. Vattenfall AB Värme Uppsala, Uppsala
8. E.ON Händelöverket, Norrköping
9. Högbjörp kraftvärmeverk, Upplands-Bro
10. Brista kraftvärmeverk, Sigtuna

The statistics include energy recovery from all waste, not just household waste.

However, a remaining problem is that emissions within the EU ETS are accounted for where they physically occur – i.e. at the waste management facility and in energy recovery – rather than where they actually arise as a result of production, design choices and consumption. This means that the costs of emission allowances currently place a heavy burden on the waste system and are ultimately funded by taxpayers, rather than by the actors responsible for the emissions.

Investments in CCUS (Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage) are required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from energy recovery. However, the transition requires not only investment in the plants themselves, but also support systems and transport and storage infrastructure. The technology involves separating carbon dioxide from flue gases during energy recovery and then storing or reusing it. Some Swedish waste treatment plants have already begun to invest in this technology.



Landfill

Landfilling involves depositing waste at an authorised site for long-term storage. It is the last treatment step in the waste hierarchy and is only used when there is no other suitable treatment method. In 2025, 1.5 percent of the household waste collected was sent to landfill.

Modern waste treatment plants are now an important part of society's resource and environmental infrastructure. Operations here are not just about landfill, but also about separating materials to increase recycling, treating organic waste through methods such as composting, and managing excavated materials in a resource-efficient manner. Landfilling is the final step in the waste hierarchy and is only used for waste that cannot be reused, recycled, treated biologically or used for energy recovery.

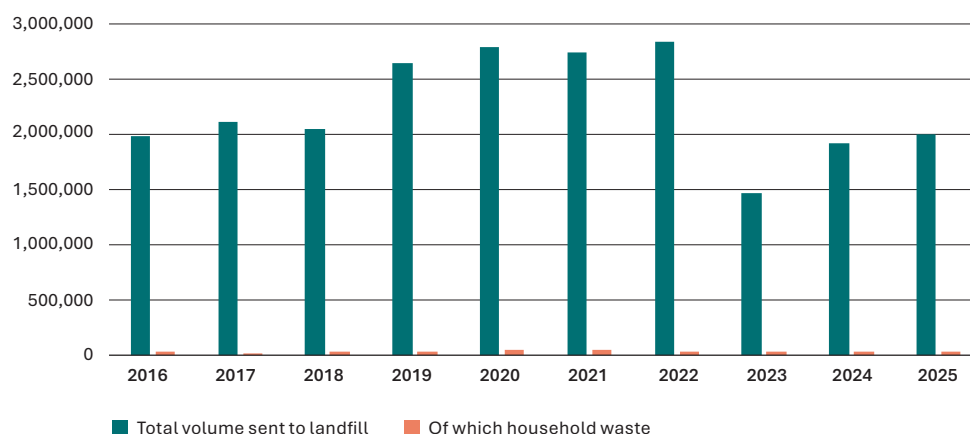
Several landfill sites are being shut down

Unlike many other countries, Sweden has a well-developed system for material recycling and energy recovery and therefore sends very little waste to landfill. In total, 2 million tonnes of waste were sent to landfill in 2025 at sites that currently accept or previously accepted household waste, and household waste accounted for only 1.5 percent of this volume. The waste that, despite everything, needs to be landfilled comes mainly from commercial activities and consists of materials such as asbestos, insulation, contaminated soil, mixed excavated materials, ash and ceramic materials that cannot be recycled.

Landfills must always be designed to protect the surrounding environment – both during operation and after closure. They are built in such a way that water cannot flow into or out of the landfill. Any water that comes into contact with the waste (mainly rainwater) is collected and treated. When landfills are shut down, the bottom barrier layer is capped, which seals in the waste and keeps it secure. Suitable surplus materials and other materials that meet the construction requirements are often used for capping. This contributes to the resource-efficient use of materials that would otherwise have had to be sent to landfill.

As more and more landfill sites are capped, the need for excavated materials for construction decreases. If such materials cannot be recycled in any other way, they must instead be sent to landfill, which, paradoxically, may lead to an increase in the total volumes sent to landfill in the coming years.

FIGURE 20. Volumes sent to landfill, 2016–2025, tonnes. Avfall Sverige's landfill statistics do not provide a complete picture of landfilling in Sweden. The statistics cover plants that accept or previously accepted household waste.



LANDFILL SITES THAT ACCEPTED THE MOST HOUSEHOLD WASTE IN 2025

A total of 30,110 tonnes of household waste was sent to landfill in Sweden in 2025, distributed across 40 sites; see Appendix 3. The ten landfill sites that accepted the most household waste in 2025:

1. Tagene avfallsanläggning, Gothenburg
 2. Avfallsupplag Djupdalen, Karlstad
 3. Fågelmyra avfallsanläggning, Borlänge
 4. Ragn-Sells Heljestorp, Vänersborg
 5. Häringetorp behandlingsanläggning, Växjö
 6. NSR Deponianläggning, Helsingborg
 7. Spillepengs avfallsanläggning, Malmö
 8. Mosseruds Återvinningsanläggning, Karlskoga
 9. Gärstad avfallsanläggning, Linköping
 10. Holkesmossen avfallsanläggning, Hagfors
-

Less gas in modern landfills

Since 2005, the disposal of organic waste in landfills has been banned. This has gradually reduced the formation of gas at landfill sites, and many modern landfills produce so little gas that no special management is required. Sending organic waste to landfill results in the formation of landfill gas – a mixture of gases consisting of roughly half methane, a potent greenhouse gas that must be captured to reduce its impact on the climate.

The captured gas is used to produce electricity and heat, or is burned off (flared) when energy recovery is not possible. As gas formation subsides very slowly, gas is still being captured from older landfill sites that accepted organic waste in the past. In 2025, 87 GWh of landfill gas was captured at 42 waste treatment plants. A total of 53.6 GWh was utilised as energy, representing a 21 percent decrease since 2024.

THE LANDFILL TAX

A tax on waste sent to landfill was introduced in 2000 with the aim of steering waste away from landfill and towards recycling. In 2025, the Government tasked the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency with jointly reviewing the tax and analysing its impact on incentivising environmentally sound behaviour. The background to this is that there are signs that, in certain cases, the tax contributes to waste being managed less effectively from an environmental perspective. The authorities' assessment is that the tax currently has a limited incentivising effect and that it is no longer the most effective policy instrument for steering towards a circular economy. They therefore propose that the tax be abolished.

Waste treatment plants are facing major investments in PFAS treatment

One of the most pressing issues for waste treatment plants is the handling of PFAS – a group of extremely persistent substances found in many products and, consequently, in waste. PFAS are found in both flue gases and leachate from landfill sites, as well as in other contaminated water at waste treatment plants. Advanced technology is required for PFAS treatment. In 2025, Avfall Sverige carried out the largest survey of PFAS to date at Swedish waste treatment plants with landfills. The results show that the levels are so high that many plants may need to implement treatment measures to ensure they do not contribute to future environmental quality standards being exceeded.

At present, only a handful of plants have installed full-scale PFAS treatment systems, which means that many will need to invest in new treatment technology in the coming years. This once again highlights a fundamental problem – that the waste management sector is forced to bear the costs of problems that primarily arise in the production sector.



REQUIREMENTS AND TARGETS

UP TO 2045

2026

Parts of the waste legislation are reformed to increase material recycling. Among other things, waste from the retail sector is deregulated.

2027

All municipalities shall have introduced kerbside collection of packaging from households and co-located businesses.

2028

Producer responsibility for textiles is to be introduced across the EU.

2030

- The volume of residual waste is to be reduced by 30 percent compared with 2023 – a voluntary target for Avfall Sverige's members.
- At least 60 percent of all municipal waste is to be recycled or prepared for reuse.
- At least 70 percent of packaging waste is to be recycled.

2035

At least 65 percent of all municipal waste is to be recycled or prepared for reuse.

2045

Sweden shall have achieved net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Co-digestion plants 2025

Municipality	Total (tonnes)	Of which food waste (tonnes)
Alvesta	81,970	3,120
Bjuv*	43,550	13,690
Borås*	20,630	11,390
Falkenberg*	78,480	31,850
Falköping	8,770	7,070
Gotland*	104,330	7,470
Gävle*	25,640	16,360
Götene*	224,570	0
Helsingborg*	128,840	21,720
Huddinge*	79,290	47,900
Härnösand*	10,120	9,670
Jönköping*	26,250	24,400
Kalmar*	22,010	310
Kalmar*	91,150	2,570
Karlshamn*	12,000	9,760
Karlskoga*	45,400	20,530
Katrineholm*	61,880	0
Kristianstad*	108,180	21,980
Laholm*	49,800	17,970
Lidköping*	85,020	0
Linköping*	111,600	45,700
Mariestad	99,010	0
Mönsterås	59,020	0
Skellefteå	11,130	9,230
Skövde*	57,830	2,030
Sotenäs*	27,050	18,680
Sävsjö*	72,300	30
Trelleborg*	68,660	0
Upplands-Bro*	51,630	40,440
Uppsala*	56,140	35,060
Vårgårda*	75,280	690
Västerås*	30,020	15,960
Västerås*	92,040	5,350
Örebro*	57,530	0
Östersund	39,450	4,170
TOTAL	2,216,570	445,100

Source: Avfall Web, Avfall Sverige.

Avfall Sverige's statistics include digestion plants classified as co-digestion plants, i.e. plants that treat several different types of biological waste.

Most co-digestion plants receive municipal waste (food waste).

More information about the plants is available on Avfall Sverige's website.

*) Plant that produces certified biofertiliser in accordance with SPCR 120

Appendix 2: Energy recovery plants 2025

Municipality	Plant	Total waste processed (tonnes)	Of which household waste from Sweden (tonnes)	Energy production (MWh)	
				Heating	Electricity
Avesta	Källhagsverket	45,020	24,760	145,420	0
Boden	Bodens Värmeverk	129,010	92,640	324,190	48,110
Bollnäs	Säverstaverket	53,170	31,730	137,840	24,750
Borlänge	Fjärrvärmeverket, Bäckelund	80,080	49,470	193,780	30,190
Borås	Ryaverket	110,700	20,650	276,250	43,010
Eda	Åmotfors Energi	67,530	12,600	157,530	17,180
Eksjö	Eksjö Energi AB	43,540	18,190	125,510	14,770
Finspång	FTV Värmeverket	22,510	1,050	60,170	1,340
Gothenburg	Sävenäs avfallskraftvärmeverk	530,480	191,720	1,540,880	218,030
Halmstad	Kristineheds avfallsvärmeverk	168,540	56,790	474,540	46,770
Helsingborg	Filbornaverket	202,700	40,000	481,820	80,000
Hässleholm	Beleverket i Hässleholm	45,710	19,210	147,520	3,720
Jönköping	Kraftvärmeverket Torsvik	145,610	26,500	445,030	73,640
Karlskoga	Karlskoga Kraftvärmeverk	95,150	33,160	151,290	21,140
Karlstad	Avfallsvärmeverket på Heden	39,520	29,830	139,860	0
Kil	Kils Avfallsförbränningsanläggning	14,780	0	48,410	370
Kiruna	Kiruna Värmeverk	34,680	7,730	97,530	4,820
Kumla	NG Nordic Förbränning	147,560	15,870	283,280	54,810
Lidköping	PC Filen	97,010	19,630	336,340	35,500
Linköping	Gärstadverket	579,320	77,770	1,425,750	266,280
Ljungby	Ljungby Energi AB	45,930	45,930	134,880	13,280
Malmö	Sysav förbränningsanläggning	539,130	160,760	1,446,430	157,770
Mora	Avfallsförbränningen Mora	*	*	*	*
Norrköping	E.ON Händelöverket	330,000	21,000	812,000	79,000
Nybro	Kraftvärmeverket Transtorp	52,700	52,700	120,480	26,250
Sigtuna	Brista kraftvärmeverk	177,890	32,580	484,320	96,010
Skövde	Värmekällan	59,790	28,570	167,340	1,130
Stockholm	Högdalenverket	615,860	176,170	1,807,480	240,400
Sundsvall	Korsta kraftvärmeverk	165,850	56,710	461,250	27,770
Södertälje	Söderenergi	410,120	0	1,423,930	237,560
Uddevalla	Lillesjö Avfallskraftvärmeverk	110,280	40,030	266,370	51,630
Umeå	Dåva kraftvärmeverk	145,250	73,090	373,590	27,750
Upplands-Bro	Högbytorp kraftvärmeverk	224,650	0	620,110	113,910
Uppsala	Vattenfall AB Värme Uppsala	333,880	106,540	1,130,190	0
Västervik	Stegeholmsverket	40,150	17,340	116,490	22,440
Västerås	Västerås Kraftvärmeverk	589,410	171,390	1,651,990	467,950
TOTAL		6,493,510	1,752,110	18,009,790	2,547,280

Avfall Sverige's statistics mainly relate to waste incineration plants that receive household waste.
Most also accept other waste.

Appendix 3: Plants that send household waste to landfill 2025

Municipality	Plant	Total waste sent to landfill (tonnes)	Of which household waste (tonnes)	Useful energy (MWh)
Arvika	Avfallsanläggning Mosseberg	2,010	450	260
Borlänge	Fågelmýra avfallsanläggning	13,770	1,550	20
Borås	Avfallsanläggning Sobacken	95,410	20	0
Dorotea	Bergvattnet	30	30	0
Eda	Lundens avfallsanläggning	850	150	0
Estöv	Rönneholms avfallsanläggning	530	360	150
Grums	Karlbergs avfallsstation	220	220	0
Gothenburg	Tagene avfallsanläggning	310,970	6,830	0
Hagfors	Holkesmossen avfallsanläggning	2,970	1,200	0
Halmstad	Skedala AFA (Brogård)	3,310	450	0
Helsingborg	NSR Deponianläggning	9,370	1,320	300
Härnösand	Älands återvinningsanläggning	11,620	100	1,380
Vankiva	Vankiva Aktiva deponier	153,280	130	0
Jönköping	Miljöhantering i Jönköping	15,960	790	0
Karlskoga	Mosseruds återvinningsanläggning	3,530	1,270	0
Karlskrona	Mältans avfallsanläggning	7,000	530	580
Karlstad	Djupdalen avfallsanläggning	12,420	1,660	0
Kil	Lersätters återvinningsanläggning	16,570	250	80
Kiruna	Kiruna avfallsanläggning	1,310	110	0
Klippan	Hyllstofta avfallsanläggning	10,390	30	790
Kramfors	Högbergets avfallsanläggning	8,560	290	0
Laholm	Ahla deponi och återvinningscentral	2,030	310	0
Lidköping	Kartåsens avfallsanläggning	22,770	320	0
Linköping	Gärstad avfallsanläggning	2,970	1,250	0
Ljungby	Bredemads avfallsanläggning	1,160	390	0
Ludvika	Björnshyttans avfallsanläggning	740	740	0
Malmö	Spillepengs avfallsanläggning	29,120	1,290	6,600
Motala	Tuddarps avfallsanläggning	3,230	510	0
Norrtälje	Salmunge avfallsanläggning	1,070	1,030	0
Skellefteå	Degermyran	5,650	340	0
Söderhamn	Långtå avfallsanläggning	2,940	70	0
Uppsala	Hovgårdens avfallsanläggning	3,790	40	0
Vetlanda	Flisshults avfallsanläggning	81,260	560	0
Vänersborg	Ragn-Sells Heljestorp	196,180	1,480	2,840
Västervik	Målserums avfallsanläggning	13,910	140	0
Växjö	Håringetorp behandlingsanläggning	12,220	1,460	610
Ystad	Hedeskoga avfallsanläggning	6,250	1,130	1,860
Älmhult	Äskya	2,630	210	110
Örebro	Atleverket	99,210	710	2,800
Östersund	Gräfsåsens deponi	3,000	390	0
TOTAL		1,170,210	30,110	18,380

Would you like to contact Avfall Sverige?

Avfall Sverige (Swedish Waste Management Association) has been the municipalities' trade association in the field of waste management and recycling since 1947. It is our members who ensure that waste is collected and recycled in all Swedish municipalities. We promote sustainable and innovative waste management, where we collaborate with others based on our social responsibility.

If you have any questions about the report or would like to get in touch with one of our experts, please contact us at info@avfallsverige.se

