



Communication efforts for the mattress collection test in Vejle, Hillerød, and Copenhagen

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COMMUNICATION EFFORTS FOR THE MATTRESS COLLECTION TEST IN VEJLE, HILLERØD, AND COPENHAGEN.

In relation to the mattress collection test in 2022, various communication efforts were made, and experiences with them are described here.

KEYWORDS: Communication, increased recycling, mattress, recycling facilities in Denmark.

ABSTRACT

A variety of communication initiatives were tested in relation to the experiment conducted throughout 2022, where mattresses in selected municipalities were collected through collaboration with designated recycling centers in Copenhagen, Hillerød, Vejle, and Odsherred. The common elements with the collection were meetings with the involved stakeholders, posters, the use of social media, and involving employees at the recycling centers. However, assessing whether a mattress could be reused proved difficult for citizens. The employees at the recycling centers turned out to be crucial for this: Employees around the container resulted in much more successful sorting.

BACKGROUND

Exact figures on the quantities of discarded mattresses per year in Denmark are not available, but a qualified estimate is around 450,000 mattresses annually (10,000-12,500 tons). Mattresses are a 'forgotten' fraction that can be recycled much better. The collection test in 2022 confirmed that this was possible through a focused effort. The test involved both bulky waste collection and recycling centers.

TEACHING HOW TO SORT CORRECTLY

Sorting - both in relation to bulky waste and at the recycling centers - is not necessarily easy. The various communication initiatives in the collection test were therefore also an attempt to simplify and optimize sorting. However, it turned out that even with posters at the recycling center, information about the mattress collection test, Facebook posts, etc., it was not easy for citizens to assess whether their mattress matched the sorting criteria. Guidance from site employees was often necessary. There was also a need for more information about bulky waste items on a bulky waste route. The employee who had been driving the bulky waste route for many years and collected bulky waste like mattresses, described part of his job as *educating the citizens*:

"We have to educate them. Some citizens keep putting out the same things again and again and again, and then I ask, "Why?" - and they answer, "Well, I just see if it goes". We have to be firm and insist that we don't take the items on the list [given to citizens when incorrect bulky waste is put out for collection]."



Poster with information about the mattress collection test and the mattress evaluation criteria



Picture 1: Added labels on the mattresses with information saying that the mattresses were a part of the collection test and would be picked up later. Picture 2: Sign (Vejle recycling facility). Picture 3: "Take good care of me" illustration. Picture 4: Illustration of the sorting criteria information.

COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

The participating municipalities have both different recycling centers and different groups of citizens. Therefore, it made sense to target the communication in various ways and through different media. A common experience was the importance of guidance from employees at the recycling centers. Correct sorting of the mattresses relies on judgment: Is it clean enough, dry enough, can it even be categorized as a mattress? These were the type of the questions that the site employees had to help the citizens with.

Sydhavnen's recycling facility

The mattress test was communicated through different digital medias:

- ARC's webpage with citizen-oriented and action guiding text, including the sorting criteria.
- Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn posts referring to ARC's page about the test.

Communication also took place at the recycling facilities:

- Fraction sign on the container saying "Mattresses".
- The container for upholstered furniture hid the word "spring mattresses" during the test period.
- Pallet sign next to the container with sorting criteria.
- A5 flyer with the sorting criteria distributed by the staff at the gate.

Additionally, there was a feature on TV2 Lorry on the 4/2 and an article on the 9/2 that communicated the test.

Hillerød recycling facility initiatives

- Pre-meeting with the manager at the recycling center, where sorting criteria were presented (yes please, no thanks, how dry/clean/intact) - the manager then displayed this information to employees.
- Poster at the mattress container - perhaps it wasn't clear
- Employees at the site presented the sorting criteria when they saw citizens bringing mattresses. Citizens who didn't interact with employees before depositing their mattress probably learned about sorting by observing the mattresses in the container, rather than reading the sorting criteria on the container sign.
- News about the mattress test on the extranet for waste management employees in Vestforbrænding's municipalities, including a focus on sorting criteria.

It was assessed that external communication on the website or social media was irrelevant based on the assumption that it would take a short time to fill a container, and that citizens would then be disappointed when making an attempt to recycle their mattress. The assumption about quickly filling the container proved to be correct.

Vejle recycling facility

The used communication efforts in Vejle were:

- Facebook posts
- Signs
- Flyers
- Teaching the recycling facility employees
- Adhesive stickers added on the mattresses, saying that they would be picked up later
- Meetings

The main effect from the Facebook post was, that the citizens were aware that they now could sort mattresses and that it was possible to get feedback on the test.

Hønsinge recycling facility, Odsherred

In Odsherred, a specific focus was on the many vacation homes, and information about the collection test was provided in "Sommerhusnyt," which has 5-6,000 vacation home owners as recipients. Additionally, communication took place at the site through the use of fraction signs and a larger information sign. Information was provided on Facebook, a brochure was created, and information was given to recycling advisors. Furthermore, a campaign was launched about "PAS PÅ MIG" (TAKE CARE OF ME), where mattresses were one of the topics.

A COMMON AMBITION: Minimise the re-sorting

Before communicating about the collection test, the municipalities considered the working environment at the recycling centers. The goal was to protect employees as much as possible from re-sorting the often heavy and unhandy mattresses. It is assumed that employees at the gate, who could guide citizens from the start, contributed to less re-sorting.

Additionally, it is recommended that communication at the recycling centers is very visible to citizens so they do not drown in various information, banners, etc.

Forfattere

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Referencer

<https://circularcph.cphsolutionslab.dk/cc/partnerships/partnership-for-circular-mattresses>

Partnere i projektet

Vejle Kommune, Odsherred Kommune, Københavns Kommune, ARC, ARGO, Vestforbrænding, Danfoam/Tempur-Sealy, Bramming Plast Industri, Region H.

