

Greening the Holidays - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Tips



During the holidays, from decorations and food to packaging and presents, there are many creative and meaningful ways to reduce our waste and ensure that what can't be reused is properly recycled. According to the [US EPA](#), household waste in the United States generally increases 25 percent between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day – about 1 million extra tons. Here are some simple ideas to consider that can make a positive change.

Make a plan to reduce before you shop, decorate, or entertain:

- Minimize store-bought gifts by drawing names, making your own, or giving services or experiences.
- Shop LO for all of your holiday needs to support our local businesses and community, find unique items, and save gas and time. And don't forget to bring a reusable shopping bag!
- Choose classic products that will last over time. Avoid plastic and battery operated toys.
- If batteries are required, invest in rechargeable batteries and a charger or check out this new rechargeable battery swap service by [Bettery](#). According to the [US EPA](#), 40% of all battery sales are during the holiday season.
- Avoid foil wrapping paper and foil-lined envelopes; they can't be recycled.
- Use decorative, reusable bags and boxes or the Sunday comics and colorful yarn for wrapping gifts.
- When entertaining, use washable dinnerware instead of disposables. If you don't have enough, borrow or rent.
- Turn off or unplug holiday lights during the day. Doing so will not only save energy, but will also help your lights last longer. If buying lights, make sure they have LED bulbs. Call Far West Fibers (503-200-5411) about recycling old holiday lights.

Reuse and recycle after the festivities are done:

- Donate unused, prepared foods from catered events and restaurants to those in need through the regional [Fork It Over!](#) program. Contact Fork it Over! at 503-725-8447.
- After opening gifts, flatten wrapping paper, roll ribbons onto toilet paper rolls, and store for later use.
- If you have a Christmas tree, please recycle it. Local groups often collect trees as a fundraiser (check the [calendar](#) for details), or recycle with your yard debris (contact [Republic Services](#) at 503-636-3011 for details). Or consider a live tree!
- Take packaging peanuts and bubble wrap to a mail service shop for reuse and some non-curb-side plastics to [Far West Fibers](#) for recycling. Contact Far West Fibers at 503-200-5411 to check current plastics being accepted.
- Recycle block foam, aka Styrofoam™, at Far West Fibers in Beaverton or Southeast Portland. Details [here](#).

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or call Far West Fibers at 503-200-5411.

- Recycle electronics for free, including TVs, PCs, and monitors through [Oregon E-Cycles](#). Far West Fibers in Foothills and Goodwill are the two Lake Oswego E-Cycles drop-off sites. Call 1-888-532-9253 or visit www.oregonecycles.org/ for details.
- Call Metro Recycling Information at 503- 234-3000 or visit the [Metro Find a Recycler website](#) for details for many other reuse and recycling options and resources.

Find additional tips and resources [here](#) and using the links below.

Web Links

[How low can your garbage go? Stop Waste Before it Starts - MetroWaste-wise Holidays - MetroEcoConsumer Green Holidays - King Co.](#), [WAreducing Winter Holiday Waste - US EPA Reduce, Recycle, Reuse - Greening the Holiday Season - US EPA Region 9 Simplify the Holidays Pledge and Resources - Center for a New American Dream](#)[Waste-free Holiday Tips handout](#)[Waste Prevention and Recycling Resources](#)

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