

Solid Waste and Recycling News  
Orange County, North Carolina  
December 2011 edition

**Christmas and New Year's Holiday Schedule Changes:**

Solid Waste Convenience Centers (SWCC's) will CLOSE EARLY at 12:00 noon on Christmas Eve, December 24. SWCC's will be CLOSED on Sunday December 25, and Sunday, January 1 in observance of the winter holidays. The Solid Waste Administrative Office located at 1207 Eubanks Rd. will be CLOSED December 23, 26, 27 and January 2.

**Some things don't change:** There is **no change in curbside recycling** service since both Christmas and New Year's Day fall on Sunday. However garbage and recycling bins can overflow this time of year, so do your best to keep it tidy by adhering to these recycling rules:

- **Have your bins out by 7:00 a.m.** Our drivers hustle to get their routes done during the holiday season, and with more people out of town, curbside recycling can be collected quickly so don't count on the trucks coming at a regular time! Have your bins out by 7:00 a.m. on your normal recycling day, or set them out the night before to ensure that they will be collected.
- **Empty and flatten cardboard boxes, 3'x3' or smaller, 10 or less at a time.** Gifts and decor may arrive in boxes filled packing material, but the boxes can't be recycled that way! Make sure to remove packing material, break boxes down flat, and stack underneath, in or between your recycling bins to prevent blowing. Our drivers can pick up 10 boxes per house per collection and only if the pieces are 3'x3' or smaller, as that is the size of the hopper on the truck. Corrugated cardboard is banned from landfill disposal in Orange County; it must be recycled. Our 24-hour recycling drop-off sites will take as many boxes as you have but empty and flatten those too! Bring any Styrofoam, bubble wrap or air-paks to local packaging stores such as UPS for them to reuse, do not leave them at the curb or at drop-offs!
- **Prepare recycling properly!** All paper such as non-metallic wrapping paper, greeting cards, newspaper, junk mail, school/office paper, newspaper, magazines, catalogs, phonebooks, cereal boxes, milk and juice cartons, any clean dry paper that tears goes in one bin. Of course you can reuse wrapping paper and old greeting cards can be cut and made into holiday postcards. Plastic bottles (a bottle is a container with a neck smaller than the base. You can flatten bottles and leave the cap on, loose caps are unlikely to be captured for recycling), metal cans (including empty aerosol spray cans), and glass bottles and jars (no crockery, tree ornaments, Pyrex, mirrors, drinking glass or light bulbs!) should be recycled separately from paper in another bin.
- **Recycle cups, tubs, buckets, toys** and other non-bottle plastics labeled #2, #4 and #5 in the purple dumpsters at staffed SWCC's, **not** in the curbside bins, apartment carts, or at unstaffed drop off sites.

**There is no change in the Orange County Landfill schedule!** If you're having an oyster roast as many do this time of year, remember to recycle your oyster shells. You can bring them to the Orange County Landfill 1514 Eubanks Rd. 7am--4pm M-F and 7:30am to noon Saturday. They will be returned to the coast to become habitat for growing new oysters. Deep frying turkeys or other foods can result in lots of extra used cooking oil. Do not pour it down the drain, that's naughty! Bring it to the Hazardous Household Waste Collection at the OC Landfill for recycling into biodiesel. Operating hours of the HHW are 10am-6pm M-F and 7:30am to noon Saturday.

**Inclement Weather changes everything!** We anticipate warmer weather this year but if snow falls or ice forms, visit the [Inclement weather page](#) on our website for schedule changes. You can also call our office at 968-2788. The phone recording should reflect any changes in the schedule due to weather or the holidays.

### **Holiday ways to reduce waste in the first place:**

- BYOB! Bring your own bag when you shop or visit bearing gifts. Remember that plastic bags are not recyclable in the County's recycling program. Recycle clean, dry, empty plastic bags at local grocery stores instead.
- BYOB! Bring your own bottle to refill with water, and bring a travel mug to your favorite religious service or coffee shop.
- BYOB! Bring your own box for leftovers. Mother will appreciate it, I promise, she loves her tupperware.
- Wrap presents in useful items such as a towel, cloth bag, or scarf, or use a reusable take out box to contain your gift.
- "Do not rent, trade, or sell my name or address". Say these words every time you order from a catalog or purchase a gift subscription over the phone. Write the words next to your name and address every time you fill a warranty, membership or subscription form. This will prevent your name and address from being spread to mail order lists. Check the box on the on-line order form to enable this.
- Use the website [www.freemymailbox.com](http://www.freemymailbox.com) to get off delivery lists for mass mailing, catalogs and phonebooks.

UNC Chapel Hill's Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling recently posted this [Green Shopping Guide](#) with neat items you can find on-line designed to reduce consumption over time, or that are made from recycled or repurposed materials! If you prefer to shop locally, you can find many nifty green gifts at TWIG in Village Plaza, Chapel Hill, including collapsible food boxes, bamboo utensils and stainless steel straws for those eschewing disposable plastics, plus personal products sustainably made from all natural materials, toys and household items with recycled or reused content and much more. My personal favorite, from [Twig's website](#) is "Woody" the flexible wooden all-ages toy. The "Wooden Gumby" is made locally with scrap hardwood in Graham, NC!

Try the newest creative reuser right here in our own neighborhood: 'A Remix Art Gallery' is at 105 E. Main St. in Carrboro, next to Jade Palace. Jean-Marie Art has an array of really gorgeous handmade gifts (wine bottle bags, yoga bags, handbags, scarves, jewelry, revisioned vintage) made skillfully from repurposed materials, and she features the work of over twenty other local artists. This week she is open Sunday 12-5, and Monday through Saturday 11am -7pm. If you choose to reuse, there are even more holiday ideas on the [The ReUse Alliance website](#).

### **Gift ideas from the "waste-free" school of giving:**

- ◆ Give the gift of time, as in several hours of respite for parents or other caregivers.
- ◆ Give friends and family a walking tour of your downtown, neighborhood, or favorite natural area.
- ◆ Give tickets to a theater show, musical performance or other local creative event.
- ◆ Give money on someone's behalf to their favorite charity, or yours. My personal favorite is [the Scrap Exchange](#) in Durham, crafty waste reducers par excellence!
- ◆ Give an experience by teaching others (or paying for lessons) how to knit, cook culinary delights, compost, build a frame, play a musical instrument, or other special skill.

**Gifts Won't Green the Holidays:** Say what? Put down those new LED holiday lights-- **THIS** is going to shock you: Carnegie Mellon University researchers have determined that there are few holiday gifts that one could buy that could significantly reduce your environmental footprint despite all the marketing messages that say otherwise. "For the **average** [emphasis added] consumer, generally the two biggest sources of your environmental footprint come from your residence, and the kind of car you drive," says H. Scott Matthews, a professor of civil and environmental engineering and engineering and public policy. For the whole story see [this CMU webpage](#)

but suffice it to say it's your behavior, not what you buy, that makes a difference. Santa knows that! It's nicer to the planet (and your pocketbook!) when you eat less meat, buy local, and consolidate your shopping trips.

Other recommendations the researchers make:

- Bike, walk, or take a bus to the store. That activity lessens the carbon footprint of purchases by about 50 percent.
- Shop in advance, buy multiple items at the same store or choose the slowest online delivery service since overnight transport increases transportation and fuel carbon footprints by 20 percent.
- Recycle wrapping paper. [YES!]
- Buy replacement appliances, lights, and cars that are energy efficient. Households use about 20 percent of their electricity on lighting so use energy efficient bulbs, such as LED tree lights.

Sounds like New Year's Resolutions! Whatever you choose to do, think well and plan ahead to ensure your gift will be needed and wanted by the recipient. Share a wish list with loved ones so they know their gifts will be wanted by you too. [Visit the NRDC's Website](#) for humorous but cautionary tales from famous people about BAD GIFT GIVING! [Note: Viewers will be asked to buy a baby buffalo or other endearing and endangered animal]

**After the holidays, recycle lights, batteries, electronics and trees!** Television and computers are banned from North Carolina landfills so you can't just toss them! Consider donating your newly replaced computer to the [Kramden Institute](#), a Durham-based non-profit dedicated to bridging the digital divide. Old, unwanted or non-working electronics of all types can be recycled at the [County's Solid Waste Convenience Centers](#). We even accept motorized toys in the collection, just be sure to remove any batteries first and recycle them at the center too. Battery rechargers make great gifts and can greatly reduce battery waste.

You can help protect your light investment by putting them away properly after use. As tempting as it may be to crumple the cord into a ball, use the side of a cardboard box with slots cut in the upper and lower edges to carefully wind the cord if you do not have the original packaging. If you've blown your bulbs or crimped the cord Orange County Solid Waste Management will accept the wiring from holiday lights in the electronics collection, if you have removed and discarded all of the little bulbs first. If that idea gives you hives, send your lights, bulbs and all, to [HOLIDAY LED's.com](#), a Michigan based company. You have to pay to ship your lights to them but they will send you a 25% off coupon good toward the purchase of new LED's from Holiday LED's.com in return.

If you have an artificial Christmas tree, use it as long as possible—the higher impacts of manufacturing it “pay off” in environmental terms compared to a natural tree in about 10 years. If you have a natural tree, all three Towns offer Christmas tree recycling at the curb as part of regular brush collection. Remove ALL decorations including tinsel and follow your Town's rules regarding length and girth of tree for collection. Contact [Carrboro Public Works](#), [Chapel Hill Public Works](#), or [Hillsborough Public Works](#) for details. You can also drop your tree off at the [Solid Waste Convenience Centers](#) (except Bradshaw Quarry Road) during operating hours or better yet, toss it in the woods to become part of the landscape again. Vegetative yard debris (leaves, tree limbs, lawn trimmings) including Christmas trees may be burned **only if public pickup is not available** and only in rural areas outside incorporated Town limits. A burn permit may be needed from the state Forest Resources division. They be reached at [www.dfr.state.nc.us](#) or 919-733-2162. Burning household garbage and non-vegetative materials is absolutely illegal in Orange County and in the state of North Carolina and is both a civil and criminal offense subject to citations, fines, and possible jail time. The following items should never ever be burned:

- Newspaper, cardboard, and other paper products
- Plastic and other synthetic materials
- Paints, household and agricultural chemicals
- Tires and other rubber products

- Asphalt shingles and heavy oils
- Lumber and other building materials
- Wire
- Buildings, mobile homes

The Environmental Enforcement section of the Orange County Solid Waste Department investigates illegal burning and dumping complaints. Please report any illegal burning activity in Orange County to [Enforcement Officer Rod Jones](#) or [Enforcement Supervisor Jeff Scouten](#).

**Happy and safe holidays to you and yours from everyone here at OC Solid Waste Management!**