



Think Green this Holiday Season

The joy and excitement of the holidays also comes with extra shipping boxes, vibrant wrapping paper and extra catalogs. As you celebrate with loved ones consider the environment and ensure items are properly sorted for reuse, recycling or trash. Here are five tips and tricks to make your celebrations as green and cheerful as possible. Happy holidays from OCRRA!

1 REDUCE

Review your current stash of decorations and wrapping materials before shopping for more.

Give an experience gift. A snowshoe hike, a homecooked meal, a dinner out or a concert are great ways to show someone you appreciate their company, and you don't have to waste wrapping paper.

Switch paper or plastic gift cards for a digital version. Many stores offer to email "cards," which are less likely to get lost.

Shop local before looking online. By supporting local businesses, you can avoid a shipping disaster, extra packaging and greenhouse gas emissions.

Wrap gifts in waste-free packaging: a reusable bag, a piece of cloth or old newspapers and twine.

At holiday gatherings, put out old dairy tubs or takeout containers for guests to take home leftover food and treats.

Opt for reusable cups, plates and utensils at holiday parties instead of paper or plastic.

3 RECYCLE ELSEWHERE (OR PUT IN TRASH):

Bubble wrap / air shipping pouches: Drop off at retail stores to recycle with other film plastics.

String lights: Bruin Recycling in Liverpool (315-410-0050) or Bodow Recycling in Syracuse (315-422-2552) accept string lights. Call in advance for preparation rules and fees. Do not put string lights in a recycle bin. They wrap around equipment at the facility where recyclables are sorted and cause delays.

2 RECYCLE IN BIN

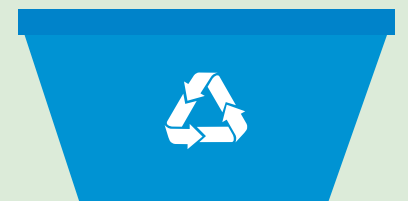
Cardboard boxes (flatten)

Magazines and holiday catalogs

Wrapping paper or gift bags (flatten) unless adorned with metallic, foil or glitter décor (those go in the trash if you can't reuse them)

Paper greeting cards and envelopes - without metallic, foil or glitter embellishments

Aluminum foil and disposable aluminum baking trays (clean and ball up)



4 REUSE

Gift bags

Bows and ribbons

Shipping materials

Tissue paper (put in trash if unusable - fibers are too small to recycle again)

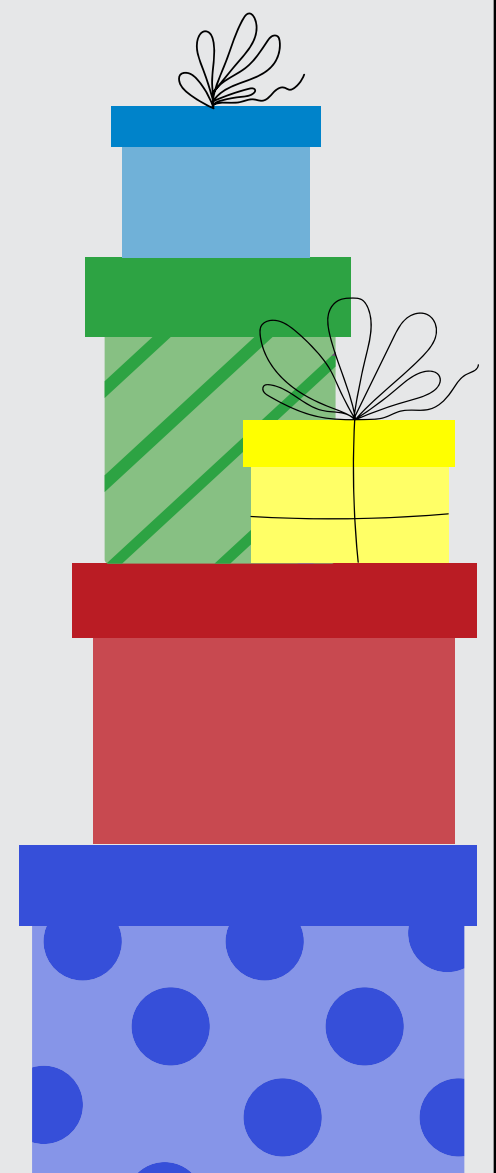


5 TRASH

Styrofoam

Bags, boxes and cards with metallic, foil or glitter embellishments

Plastic cutlery, straws and cups



OCRRA COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Photo Credit: OCRRA, 2023.

Recycling Specialist Lisa Piering offers guidance to visitors at the Westcott Street Cultural Fair in Syracuse. OCRRA provided information about proper e-waste and household toxics management, recycling rules, composting and more!



Photo credit: FOCUS Greater Syracuse, Inc.

Classmates in the Citizens Academy question a panel including OCRRA Public Information Officer Tammy Palmer, OCWA Executive Director Jeffrey Brown and WEP Commissioner Shannon Harty. The program invites the public to learn about local services.



Photo Credit: OCRRA, 2023.

Covanta's Paul Abt shows members of Leadership Greater Syracuse what happens to curbside trash collected in Onondaga County. The group's tour of the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville included a Q&A with OCRRA Engineer Cristina Albunio.



Photo Credit: OCRRA, 2023.

OCRRA Personnel Administrator Michca Ballard-Fortin chats with a student at the SUNY ESF Career and Internship Fair. She's sharing opportunities in the world of waste management, recycling and composting. Visit www.OCRRA.org to see our openings.

Winter 2023 | Volume 32 No.4

This quarterly publication is brought to you by



100 Elwood Davis Road | North Syracuse, NY 13212-4312

TAMMY PALMER
Editor and
Public Information Officer
(315) 453 - 2866
info@OCRRA.org

OCRRA's waste reduction, reuse and recycling program efforts (including this newsletter) are partially financed by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Printed on Recycled Paper



FACT: Recyclables must always be loose in your bin for proper sorting. Bagged recyclables become trash.

Collection Event Event Nets 470 Grams of Mercury

Maria Bianchetti, Recycling Specialist

Thank you to the 114 community members who showed up for the 10th annual OCRRA and Covanta Mercury Drop-off Event on September 16. Onondaga County residents brought in 158 mercury thermometers and 78 mercury thermostats for recycling. Their efforts kept 470 grams of mercury out of the waste stream, equivalent to the amount of mercury in 117,500 compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs).

Since Covanta and OCRRA began partnering on this recycling program, more than 6,700 grams of mercury have been collected. That adds up to the amount you'd find in more than 1.6 million CFLs. Mercury that ends up in the environment can be harmful to humans and animals. Never put items that contain mercury in trash or recycling bins; mercury needs special management.

If you missed the collection event, thermometers can be properly managed year-round through OCRRA's Household Hazardous Waste program. Visit www.OCRRA.org/toxics for a list of the program's acceptable materials and to make an appointment. Be sure to gather all your household toxics for one trip. This makes OCRRA's program more cost-effective and allows us to continue offering the service at no cost to Onondaga County residents.

Search www.thermostatrecycle.org for local drop-off sites where you can dispose of mercury thermostats, as they are not accepted at OCRRA's Household Hazardous Waste Program. Contact Miller Environmental Group at (315) 451-6666 for fees and instructions if you need to get rid of other mercury items that are not accepted through OCRRA's Household



Photo Credit: OCRRA, 2023.

During the OCRRA and Covanta Mercury Collection Event, Onondaga County residents dropped off 158 mercury thermometers for safe handling.

Hazardous Waste Program. Taking little steps to remove these items from the environment is a big benefit to humans and animals alike.

Maria Bianchetti can be reached at mbianchetti@ocrra.org



Recycling Rhoda

Fluorescent Bulbs

Dear Rhoda,

I know there is mercury inside fluorescent bulbs. How do get rid of them?

— Flo in Fayetteville

Dear Flo,

Your instincts are correct. Fluorescent bulbs should be handled separately from other light bulbs since they contain a small amount of mercury, which can be harmful to the environment and human health. Fortunately, you have several convenient options for proper management of fluorescent bulbs.

1) OCRRA works with several hardware stores to provide free fluorescent bulb disposal to Onondaga County households. See the list in blue. NOTE: Only CFLs, 2-foot and 4-foot tubes, U-shaped and circular bulbs are accepted for recycling.

2) Some Home Depot and Lowe's stores take only CFLs, the small "twirly"

kind are accepted. Call your local shop in advance to confirm the details.

3) OCRRA's free Household Toxics Drop-off program will accept all fluorescent bulbs (including 8-foot tubes), but only if they are combined with other household toxics. Visit www.OCRRA.org/Toxics to see what is accepted and to make the required appointment.

These programs are for Onondaga County residents only. Businesses should use the searchable database on www.OCRRA.org for more information.

If your CFL is broken, please follow guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency at www.tinyurl.com/CFLBroken for safe handling. Flo, keep following your instincts and check with OCRRA if you have any disposal doubts.

Yours truly,

Recycling Rhoda

Hardware Store Drop-off Options

Bob's Ace Hardware,
4805 S. Salina St., Syracuse

Tully Building Supply,
24 Onondaga St., Tully

Calley's Hardware,
15 North St., Marcellus

Valu Home Center, Airport
Plaza, 3803 Brewerton Rd.,
Syracuse

City Hardware,
214 South Geddes St.,
Syracuse

Valu Home Center, Western
Lights Plaza, 4671 Onondaga
Blvd., Syracuse

Manlius True Value,
8225 Cazenovia Rd., Manlius

Village ACE Hardware,
204 S. Manlius St.,
Fayetteville

Nightingale Mills Ace
Hardware, 4068 S Street
Road., Marcellus

Village ACE Hardware,
43 E. Genesee St.,
Baldwinsville

Nightingale's Tully Lakes
Hardware, 6 Elm St., Tully

Wrightway Hardware,
9236 Oswego Rd.,
Baldwinsville

Suburban ACE Hardware,
7990 Oswego Rd., Liverpool

Reduce, Reuse and Repair for Sustainability

Lisa Piering, Recycling Specialist

Everything we use is made of natural resources. Some are finite and we'll eventually run out of them, like marble and oil. Some are not impacted by how much of them we use, like solar and wind. Some renew themselves, but only if used slowly.

A forest logged so often that seeds cannot grow; or so heavily no trees are left to drop fresh seeds, will run out of timber. Those resources are called depletable, and we can help protect them by reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling items as often as possible.

Resources used faster than they grow are in overshoot, which is unsustainable. You cannot get timber from a bare field. It is a little like spending more than your paycheck. When we are in overshoot on a resource, we are in debt. The only way to "pay back" a debt on a natural resource is to create conditions that allow it to be replenished. For example, reseed a forest and let it grow. However, if a species has gone extinct or the conditions it needs to grow no longer exist, that debt can never be repaid.

In nature, resource use is cyclical: A tree pulls carbon from the air and nutrients from the soil to make leaves in the spring, then it sheds those leaves and returns them to the soil and air through decomposition in the fall. The cycle repeats itself and nothing is wasted. This can be kept up forever; it is sustainable.

Far too often, the approach is linear: Resources are collected, used for a short time and then thrown "away." I challenge you to find "away" on a globe. All of our waste continues to exist. Whether it is melted into a new glass bottle, converted to steam to make electricity, transformed into nutrient-rich compost or left in a landfill to release harmful methane during decomposition – it still exists.

Reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling extends the life of our materials, slows down the extraction of natural resources and gives the planet more time to replenish itself. This makes our economy more circular and our lives more sustainable.

Lisa Piering can be reached at lpiering@ocrra.org.

Linear Resource Model



Circular Resource Model



Reduce Food Waste at Holiday Feasts



Photo Credit: iStock.com/Viktor Cap

Use what you have:

- Review refrigerator contents every week. Make a list before you shop. Stick to what you need.
- Use by, sell by, and best by dates are manufacturer suggestions for the best quality, not the safety of food. Research safety regulations for items before you toss them out.
- In cupboards, store new items behind older food that needs to be used first.

Cook Creatively:

- Use Everything! If you wash carrots, potatoes and similar vegetables thoroughly - you don't need to peel them.
- Find recipes (pesto and hummus) that use stems of broccoli and kale or the leafy green tops of carrots and beets. Find ideas at www.ocrra.org/end-food-waste.
- Use scraps and bones to make soup stock that gets strained.
- Consider leftovers before you cook. It's hard to save uneaten portions of one big apple pie. Instead, find pans/trays to make personal or bite-sized portions that are easy to freeze and defrost individually.

Compost:

- Food scraps don't belong in a recycling bin but they can be composted. Research a DIY option for your home.
- If you can't compost at home, buy an OCRRA Compost Site pass for \$25 and drop off unlimited food and yard waste, which will be turned into compost or mulch for local gardens and landscapes.

Reduce Other Waste:

- Send party invitations via email or social media.
- Avoid using disposable plates, cutlery, straws and cups at parties.
- Encourage guests to bring reusable containers to take home leftovers.

FACT: Reduce waste by removing your name from undesired magazine, newspaper and catalog delivery lists.

CNY Creations — Reuse Gift Cards

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

Gift cards can reduce holiday waste by giving friends and family the option to choose a gift they want and need. Once the balance hits zero, you don't have to toss your used gift cards, you could use them to make a storage container!

Maggie Feyerabend, from Central Square, uses her creation to store reusable bags in her trunk. She used wire hangers for the frame, punched/



Maggie Feyerabend, Central Square, 2022

drilled holes into the cards and zip tied them together.

Thanks to Maggie for sharing her creative design. If you choose not to reuse your gift cards, they belong in the trash, not the recycling bin.

If you have a unique and fun idea for reducing waste and reusing items, let us know! We may share it in a future newsletter or online. Please share your personal creations only. Take a photo and send an email with step-by-step instructions to recreate your craft (if necessary) to tpalmer@OCRRRA.org with the subject: CNY Creations

Keeping items out of the waste stream cuts disposal costs. Reusing materials helps preserve more natural resources for future generations. Together, we can all Save the World a Little Each Day!

Save and Swap Halloween Costumes

Clothing and other textiles NEVER belong in your recycling bin. The material gets dirty and wet in bins (rendering it not recyclable) and wraps around equipment that sorts recyclables, causing delays. However, a fun costume can still be reused!

Consider organizing a Halloween costume swap in your neighborhood or look for a larger community exchange to support. For example, the Betts Branch Library at 4862 S Salina St. in Syracuse collects costumes in good condition during the month of November. They'll be given away before Halloween next year.

Let another family enjoy your used pirate and princess outfits. In turn, you can pick out free costumes that were shared by another family. If you can't find or host a swap where you live, consider donating nice costumes to thrift stores. Save shopping time, money and our planet's natural resources.



REDUCE

Spend money on experiences instead of gifts

Shop local to reduce shipping waste

Create a "library of things" to share with friends/neighbors (tools, party supplies)

REUSE

Skip disposable cutlery with takeout

Shop at thrift stores and donate unwanted items

Join "buy nothing" groups to give and get repurposed goods

REPAIR

Advocate for "right to repair" laws

Buy items that can be repaired

Hire a seamstress or learn basic mending skills online

Fix or refurbish furniture

Receipts are paper items that CANNOT be recycled!

RECYCLE RIGHT
NEW YORK



Toss in the trash,
and next time skip the slip!

Here's an easy way to reduce waste! Don't take a receipt if you don't need one. Receipts never belong in the recycling bin because many contain BPA, a chemical associated with adverse health effects at high rates of exposure. BPA can contaminate other paper products being recycled. Reduce waste by letting your cashier know when you don't need a receipt. Otherwise, put them in the trash. Find more information about BPA from the Environmental Protection Agency: <https://tinyurl.com/BPABackground>.

Making Moves: OCRRA Staff and Board Changes

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

The end of the year brings us to the end of an important chapter for Maureen Nosik and OCRRA. Our longtime colleague is retiring after three decades of service. The news is bittersweet. To say she has had a profound impact would be an understatement. Many of the people working for OCRRA today were interviewed and hired under Maureen's watch.

Nosik has been a member of the OCRRA team since 1991, dedicated to Human Resources. During a long and treasured career, she served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Onondaga County Employee Benefits Association (OCEBA). Her noted accomplishments include working with the OCEBA Board to provide members with quality health care while keeping costs as affordable as possible.

Her fondest memories fall during the holidays when Nosik spearheaded efforts to adopt a family each year. So many gifts were gathered she says it always brought her near tears witnessing the generosity of co-workers who she praises as kind and professional.

Nosik's knowledge and insight will be missed as much as her guidance, sense of humor and friendship. OCRRA's staff is sending Maureen Nosik into retirement with admiration, endless praise, and many thanks for a stellar career serving the public.

We are incredibly lucky that the Human Resources baton is being passed to Michca Ballard-Fortin, who also brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role with OCRRA. Previously, she held a Human Resources position with the City of Syracuse Police Department. Ballard-

Fortin offers years of experience in the municipal sector as well as non-profit and large private sector personnel development and training.

A graduate of SUNY Potsdam, she is a transplant to Central New York after living and working across the United States, Canada and Europe. She sees OCRRA's work as important, complex and dynamic. Ballard-Fortin says she is excited to usher in the next generation of people who want to do good work. Everyone at OCRRA is excited to watch her set and achieve new goals.

After many years and hundreds of hours of service, Lee Klosowski's final term on OCRRA's Board of Directors has ended with a long list of notable contributions. Klosowski began serving on OCRRA's Board of Directors in 2009. His deep knowledge of the agency's operations offered a steady and reliable voice through major projects, challenges and facility upgrades.

Appointed by the Onondaga County Executive, Klosowski's time as the Director of Energy and Sustainability in the Onondaga County Office of the Environment made him a perfect fit for OCRRA's mission and values. His work includes leading the search committee for an Executive Director and overseeing an extensive 2020 recycling report. More recently, he served as chair of the Administration Committee. Klosowski's many years of service helped strengthen the agency's foundation as his replacement, Gregory Poppo, and other members of the Board carry the mission forward.

Tammy Palmer can be reached at tpalmer@OCRRA.org



Maureen Nosik



Michca Ballard-Fortin



Lee Klosowski

RECYCLING

RULES

PAPER	PLASTIC	METAL	GLASS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boxes: Cardboard, pasta, takeout pizza (flatten; no frozen or refrigerated boxes) Newspapers, magazines, catalogs, mail, window envelopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bottles (no toxics) Jars Jugs (items with handles) Stackable dairy tubs (or dairy alternatives) Ignore numbers; recycle by shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food/beverage cans Aluminum foil, disposable aluminum pans & plates (clean and wad up) Aerosol cans (empty only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food containers (salsa, tomato sauce, jelly, etc.) Beverage bottles (any color)

Don't see an item? Visit OCRRA.org to search our database.



From the Executive Director's Desk...

Changing Recycling Trends and the Role of Circular Economy Thinking

Kevin Spillane, Executive Director, OCRRA

The New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building the Circular Economy Through Sustainable Materials Management recommends actions to reduce the climate impact of solid waste and provides direction for waste reduction, reuse, recycling, collection, transportation, disposal investments, policies and practices over the next decade. Sustainability has become the watchword for communities grappling to balance the public's demand for environmentally friendly products against the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's regulations for waste disposal.

At the core of this change is the understanding that today, more than ever before, we must work toward creating a circular economy in order to be fully immersed in real environmental change. The circular economy model calls for industries to repurpose waste for use in other areas of industry and the economy.

We need to uncover industry opportunities to recycle in a way that doesn't simply "get rid of" unwanted items but turns them into something useful – the true definition of circular economy thinking. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs can lead the way, creating incentives for companies to explore end-of-life management of their products.

For example, 16 months after New York's PaintCare program launched, more than 1 million gallons of leftover architectural paint products have been collected. Across the state, 300 sites are open to residents, schools and businesses to drop off unused paint and reduce waste. Visit www.PaintCare.org for a list of locations. Watch how the recycling program works here: www.tinyurl.com/ReusePaint.

According to PaintCare's website, "In New York, 36.6 million gallons of paint are sold annually, and it is estimated that about

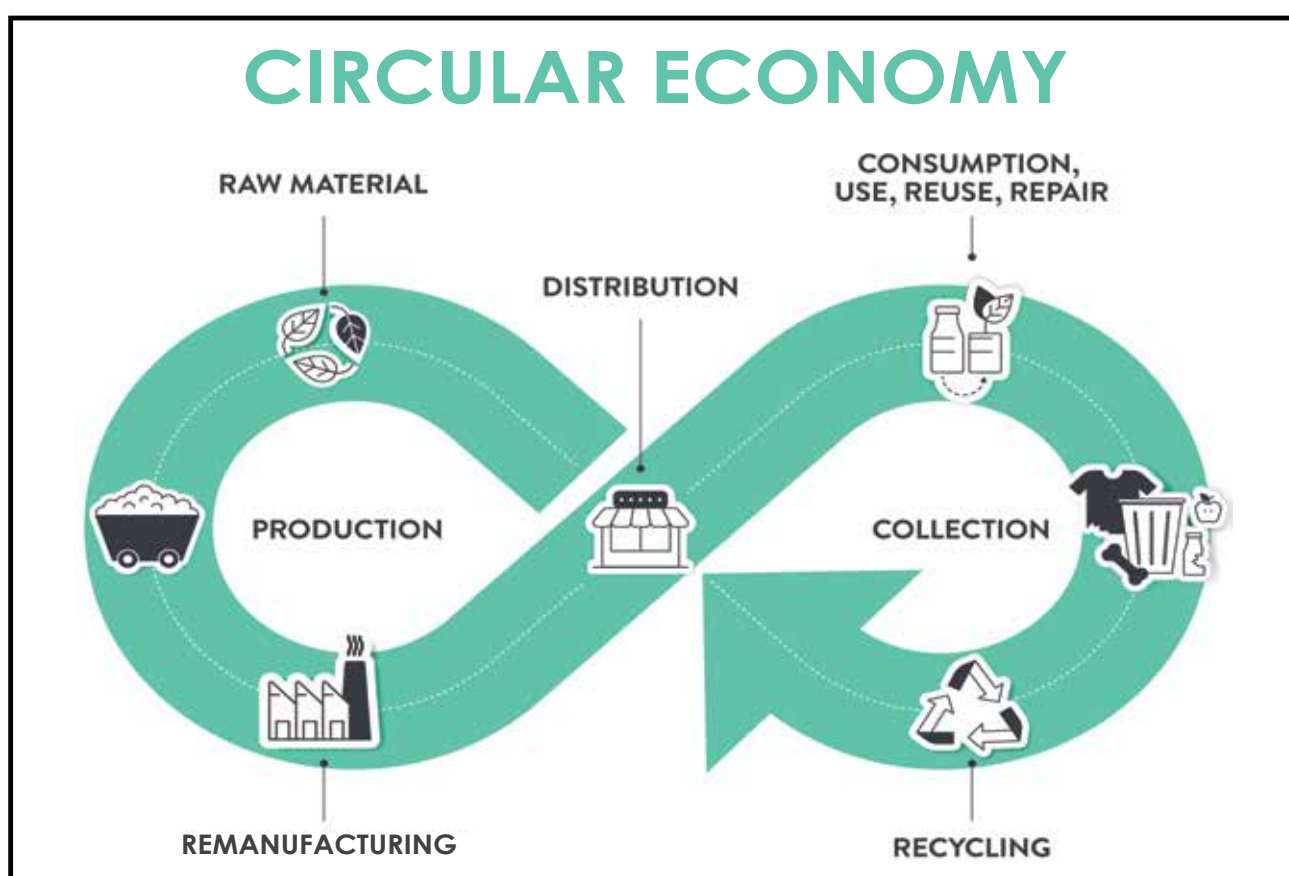


Photo Credit: iStock, 2023.

10 percent of household paint goes unused. PaintCare helps ensure the 'highest, best use' for paint collected in the program, including giving away good quality material as-is, recycling it, or putting it to another beneficial use."

This type of thinking means we can get much closer to New York State's "zero waste to landfill" goal, as expressed in their draft Solid Waste Management Plan. By using a "whole system" approach through recycling, reuse, recovery and leaning toward value-adding ideas, we can potentially create numerous environmental, social and economic opportunities.

Not all waste can be reused or recycled. Even when it is possible, the cost to recycle or reuse can sometimes be prohibitive. The need for waste management strategies that look at the full value cost of waste and waste disposal is critical to ensure all our waste is recycled, reused or disposed of in a proper and cost-effective manner, while propelling us toward that circular economy.



Never put food scraps or unwanted clothing in a curbside recycling bin. Check out www.YouTube.com/@OCRRA to see our short new videos with guidance for reusing those items and more!



Real Christmas Tree Drop-off Schedule in January

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

When it is time to take down your real Christmas tree, it can be reused for mulch and compost. If your municipality doesn't offer pickup service (call the highway department to check), OCRRA has two sites where real trees are accepted from Onondaga County residents.

Visit the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Sites, Monday through Friday only (no weekends), Jan. 2 - 12, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. You will not need a compost site pass to drop off a real Christmas tree and there is no fee.

OCRRA grinds the trees into mulch that residents can purchase when it's time to prepare for planting and landscaping in the spring. That's why all decorations must be removed. Pieces of tinsel, plastic,

metal and glass ornaments do not belong in mulch. Put tree decorations in the trash if they are unusable and you need to get rid of them.

Artificial trees do not belong at OCRRA Compost Sites. Some thrift stores will take them as donations, but they may require the original box for packaging. Call ahead and check your local store's policy before making a delivery.

If your hauler doesn't accept artificial trees as trash, they may be dropped off at the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station for a fee. The site is open to residents Monday through Friday, 3:30 to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. Visit www.OCRRA.org for more details.

Tammy Palmer can be reached at tpalmer@ocrra.org.



Winter Disposal Tips



A snowblower that cannot be donated may be recycled at Bodow Recycling. Call (315) 422-2552 for pricing details. For disposal, remove fluids and visit OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Site for a fee.



Small Shovels (plastic or metal) that cannot be reused can be put in a trash bin. If too large for trash pick-up, visit the Rock Cut Road Site for a fee. The metal is recovered from trash for recycling.



Ice melt, rock salt, road salt or sodium chloride are not hazardous and can be thrown away in the trash.



Ice scrapers & snow brushes that are no longer usable can be placed in your curbside trash bin.



QUESTION OF THE QUARTER

Follow OCRRA on Facebook and ask us all your recycling and disposal questions!

Q: How do I get rid of a fire extinguisher?

A: Never put a fire extinguisher in the recycling bin. They cannot be managed at the facility where recyclables are sorted. But, that doesn't mean the metal cannot be recycled if you drop off a fire extinguisher for proper handling.

Each of the following locations have different preparation requirements (for example, valves must be removed and / or must be empty) and they may limit the number allowed per drop-off. Call in advance for details.

- Ben Weitsman & Son, Solvay (315) 488-3171
- Bodow Recycling, Syracuse (315) 422-2552
- Chuck's Fire Equipment, Syracuse (315) 422-3655
- Metalico, Syracuse (315) 463-9292

This list of locations is also available through the searchable database on www.OCRRA.org. If you aren't sure how to dispose of an item, check it out!

REDUCE WASTE — REUSE WINTER SPORTS GEAR

If you get new winter sports gear during the holidays, you may be able to make some money by selling your used supplies. Also, buying used equipment will save you money. Helmets, skis, hockey gear, snowboards and more more can be donated, sold online or sold to places like Play It Again Sports in Syracuse - if they are in good condition.

Mark Your Calendar

REAL TREE DROP-OFF

**JAN. 2 -12,
NO WEEKENDS
7:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.**

**Amboy/Jamesville
Compost Sites**

COMMUNITY DROP-OFF EVENTS

**OPTIONS BEYOND OCRRA
FOR ELECTRONICS,
SHREDDING, ETC.**

**[www.tinyurl.com/
CollectionEvents](http://www.tinyurl.com/CollectionEvents)**

ALL OCRRA SITES CLOSED

**THURSDAY, NOV. 23
MONDAY, DEC. 25 & JAN. 1**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE

**CLOSED FOR THE SEASON
BEGINNING NOV. 19**

Reopens in Spring 2024