



Shipping and Packing Materials: Recycle, Drop off or Toss?



Plastic bubble mailer and film plastic pouch.



Drop Off to Recycle: Large retailers (e.g., big box stores and chain supermarkets) are required to accept clean and dry film plastics for recycling. Cut off and throw away decals first.



Trash: If you cannot take these materials to a big box store, throw them away. Film plastics wrap around machines that sort recyclables and contaminate recyclable paper.



Air pillows and bubble wrap.



Drop Off to Recycle: If you are unable to reuse these, they can be taken to big box stores and chain supermarkets for recycling. Puncture and flatten air pillows before dropping them off.



Trash: If you are unable to drop these materials off at a store, throw them away.



Cardboard, Amazon's padded paper mailer (white dots inside) and plain Kraft paper.



Curbside Recycling: Place all of these items in your curbside recycling bin or cart. Break down cardboard boxes into pieces no larger than 3'x3'. Place flattened cardboard inside the recycling container; never bundle. All items must be loose for easy sorting at the recycling facility.



Molded paper pulp, Styrofoam, and mixed material mailers (e.g., paper envelope with plastic or fiber lining).



Trash: Throw all of these items away. Molded paper pulp has been recycled so many times the fibers are not large enough to recycle again. All types of Styrofoam go in the trash, including packing peanuts. While the mailers shown here have paper on the outside, different material on the inside means they must go in the trash.

Repair Café CNY Gives Broken Items New Life

Lisa Piering, Recycling Specialist

Imagine, a lamp your grandmother gave you years ago suddenly stops working. You don't know how to fix it, but don't want to throw it away. You wish a little elf would magically restore it, along with your happy memories. But alas, your gift-giving acquaintances do not have the skills to repair your special keepsake.

Enter: Repair Cafes! These events bring repair experts together to help community members fix their stuffed animals, clothing and so much more. Along the way, they extend the life of an item, save it from the trash can and reduce waste.

Morgan Ingraham, from the Institute of Sustainability Engagement at Syracuse University, has spearheaded efforts to revitalize the program locally, with Repair Café CNY. She has two events under her belt so far and plans to organize spring and fall events in 2026. The challenge? The free program relies entirely on skilled volunteers.

“We look for friendly, patient people who like to fix things,” Ingraham explains. “We also need volunteers to do non-repair tasks, such as helping with drinks and snacks... greeting and signing people in or administrative tasks. You do not need to be a fixer to be a part of this!”

The most common repairs involve lamps, bikes, small appliances, furniture, electronics, toys, gardening tools, clothing, shoes and backpacks. What can be repaired depends on who volunteers for the event, but they do have some restrictions: no gas-powered items, no large appliances (washing machines, fridges, etc.), no TVs/CRT monitors nor microwaves. No complex tech that requires soldering or hard-to-source parts replacement (e.g., laptops). No items with mold, pest damage or biohazards.

Since this is not an OCRRA event, anyone who wants to be part of the support or fix-it crews should send an email directly to repaircafecny@gmail.com for more information. Ingraham is building a foundation for the program, with hopes of encouraging and mentoring others who would like to organize their own recurring repair events across CNY.

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



Photo Credit: Repair Café CNY, 2025.

Volunteer Edward Deaver, a “fixer,” inspects a lamp dropped off during a Repair Café CNY event in early 2025. Organizers say lamps are one of the most common items brought in for repairs. Other fixed items included everything from a weed trimmer and sandals to jewelry and stuffed animals.

Green Up Onondaga County

For a better, greener tomorrow...

PLANT A TREE!

Annual Tree & Shrub Sale

Bare-Root Stock

Featuring Non-Invasive & Native Species

- ✓ Fruit Trees
- ✓ Conifers
- ✓ Deciduous Trees
- ✓ Conservation Pacs
- ✓ Bluebird & Bat Houses
- ✓ OCRRA's Premium Compost (40 Lb. Bags)

Taking Orders Through March 6, 2026



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District | Call 315-457-0325 for an order form or visit www.ocswcd.org

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Printed on Recycled Paper

FACT: EPA: The amount of municipal solid waste generated in the U.S. reached nearly 300 million tons in 2018.



Recycling Rhoda

E-BIKE BATTERIES

Dear Rhoda,

It will be time to replace my e-bike's battery soon. After reading stories about how dangerous batteries in these devices can be, I want to make sure I'm disposing of it properly. Can you help?

— E-biker in Elbridge

Dear E-biker,

Can I help? I've never been more eager to help with a disposal question! Let's hit rewind before we explore disposal. The proper management of e-bike batteries starts long before you need to get rid of them. Fire prevention experts recommend using a manufacturer-approved charging device. When charging, place it away from flammable materials and doors, in case a fire ignites and you need to get out quickly. Watch for signs of battery damage or overheating, such as an unusual odor or change in color, and immediately remove the battery when it is fully charged. Do not leave it sitting on the charger.

Preventing damage to your e-bike battery not only protects you, it makes the disposal process easier down the road if the battery is intact. First, e-bike batteries NEVER belong in a curbside trash or recycling bin – no exceptions. If they get crushed in a garbage truck



The rechargeable battery on an e-bike ignited after becoming damaged in a scrap metal pile at Rock Cut Road Transfer Station. An OCRRA employee quickly separated and covered the burning battery cells with kitty litter to prevent a larger fire.

or jostled around at the facility where recyclables are sorted – the risk of a fire increases significantly. A damaged, overheated or leaking lithium-ion battery can combust. Once a fire starts, nearby cells in the battery can ignite as well. The chemical reaction, known as thermal runaway, is difficult for firefighters to get under control. Even when a battery involved in a fire is extinguished, it can reignite.

Recently, an e-bike was left in a scrap metal pile at Rock Cut Road Transfer Station with the rechargeable battery still attached.

The battery was damaged in the pile and ignited. Fortunately, an OCRRA employee noticed the issue immediately and was able to address it. If that rechargeable e-bike battery had not been noticed, we might have faced serious injuries and very costly damage at the facility. All rechargeable batteries MUST be removed from items before disposal.

E-bike batteries are NOT accepted at OCRRA battery kiosks. Rather, you can find drop-off options through Call2Recycle, a nationwide consumer battery recycling and stewardship program. Visit www.call2recycle.org, click "Drop Off Locations", add your city, check the box for "e-bike batteries" and scroll down for results. Check regularly for updates, as this program is not run by OCRRA.

If you bought an e-bike from a local store, find out if they accept batteries from customers. Otherwise, batteries for e-mobility devices (e.g., hoverboards, scooters and e-bikes) can be managed through an appointment with OCRRA's Household Hazard-

ous Waste Drop-off Program. Onondaga County residents are allowed two free appointments annually. OCRRA pays a flat fee per appointment, whether you drop off one item or several. Help us keep the program free by reviewing the list of acceptable items and gathering everything you (and perhaps your neighbors) need to get rid of, so you can drop off everything at one appointment. Visit www.OCRRA.org/toxics for details.

AFTER the batteries have been removed and managed separately, according to OCRRA's guidelines, e-bikes that are no longer usable can be dropped off at Rock Cut Road Transfer Station in Jamesville. Our new Battery Management Page at www.OCRRA.org/batteries shows visitors how to safely manage all battery types at end-of-life. Thank you for making the effort to prevent life-threatening and costly fires in our community.

Sincerely,

Recycling Rhoda



Photo Credit: iStock.com/Piksel, 2025.

Photo Credit: OCRRA, Jamesville, 2025.

RECYCLING GUIDE



CURBSIDE RECYCLING



DON'T BAG RECYCLABLES



PAPER

- Newspapers, magazines, catalogs and softcover books
Keep loose, don't tie.
- Papers and mail (including window envelopes)
- Boxes: cardboard, takeout pizza, pasta, cereal, etc. (no boxes that go in the fridge or freezer)
Empty and flatten.



PLASTIC (IGNORE NUMBERS; RECYCLE BY SHAPE)

- Bottles: beverage, soap, shampoo, etc. (no bottles that held toxics)
Empty, rinse and reattach cap.
- Jars: mayonnaise, sauce, nuts, jelly, parmesan cheese, etc.
Empty, rinse and reattach cap.
- Jugs (items with a handle): milk, orange juice, water, laundry detergent, etc.
Empty, rinse and reattach cap.
- Stackable dairy tubs (only those used for dairy and dairy alternative products): butter, yogurt, cottage cheese, etc.



METAL

- Food and beverage cans
Empty, rinse and place lid inside can.
- Aluminum foil and disposable aluminum pans and plates
Must be clean and wadded up.
- Aerosol cans
Must be empty. No cans that held toxics; they should go in the trash.



GLASS

- Food containers: salsa, jam, sauce, salad dressing, etc.
Empty, rinse and reattach lid.
- Beverage bottles (any color)
Empty, rinse and reattach cap.



DROP OFF TO RECYCLE



- Shredded paper
For details, visit ocrra.org/shredded-paper or put in the trash.



- Plastic bags (clean and dry)
Recycle at large grocery and retail stores or put film plastics in the trash.
- Electronics
Visit ocrra.org/ewaste for more details.



- Batteries
NEVER put batteries in your home recycling bin. Visit ocrra.org/batteries for drop-off information.
- Propane tanks
For details, visit ocrra.org/propane-tanks.



- Light bulbs
Place LED and incandescent bulbs in the trash. Visit ocrra.org/fluorescent-bulbs for help managing fluorescent bulbs.



TRASH



- Frozen and refrigerated food boxes
- Soda/beer boxes
- Takeout or fast food boxes
- Egg cartons (any type)
- Items with glitter or foil
- Tissue paper
- Hardcover books



- Any plastics not listed above
- Tanglers: string lights, cords, hoses, etc.
- "Clamshells": berry, salad, bakery cartons
- Takeout or fast food boxes
- Disposable utensils
- Diapers, wipes and toys
- Containers that held toxics
- Pool covers and liners



- Any metals not listed above
- Needles (must be sealed)
Visit ocrra.org/sharps to review preparation guidelines.
- Small appliances: toasters, air fryers, vacuums, radios, etc
- Combination metal-cardboard canisters: peanuts, cocoa, oatmeal, coffee, etc.
- Empty metal paint cans
- Chains, cables, leashes, etc.



- Broken glass
- Drinking glasses
- Dishes and mugs
- Ovenware and ceramics
- Window and picture glass
- Mirrors
Seal or cover sharp edges to prevent harm to waste workers.

OCRRA COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Syracuse, 2025.

Mary Starowicz, Geddes, shows off the freebies she picked up at the annual OCRRA and Reworld Mercury Thermometer and Thermostat Collection event. The devices never belong in curbside trash or recycling bins, where they can break and leak harmful Mercury. Hundreds of items were dropped off. Registrants left with free gift cards and digital thermometers provided by Reworld, which operates the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, where Onondaga County's trash is converted into enough electricity to power roughly 30,000 households.



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Fayetteville, 2025.

OCRRA Recycling Specialist Lisa Piering reviews Onondaga County's recycling rules with fifth graders from the Fayetteville-Manlius Central School District. Wildlife, plant and sustainability experts are invited to host learning stations during the Environmental Field Days at Green Lakes State Park. OCRRA held a fun relay race, in which teams are given common household items and must quickly decide if they belong in trash or recycling bins. Piering reviews the results to make sure students understand local recycling guidelines.



HOW DO I GET RID OF...?



FURNITURE

REUSE

Furniture in good condition can often be donated to charitable organizations, including:

- Salvation Army, www.salvationarmy.org, (315) 445-0520
- Rescue Mission, www.rmsyr.org, (315) 453-7242
- A Tiny Home for Good, www.atinyhomeforgood.org, (315) 220-0240, can take items that fit in small spaces (dressers, tables, desks) and like-new appliances (washer, dryer, small refrigerator), but no beds, bed frames or older TVs.
- Syracuse Habitat ReStore, www.syracuserestore.org, (315) 475-9172 (prefer furniture from smoke-free homes). Space is limited. Always reach out in advance to confirm they have room for your item. Email: restore@syracusehabitat.org

NOTE: mattresses, box springs, waterbeds and bean bag chairs are generally NOT accepted for donations

RECYCLE

Metal furniture can be delivered to the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station in Jamesville to be recycled.

DISPOSAL

Plastic and wooden furniture can be delivered to Rock Cut Road Transfer Station for disposal. Visit www.OCRRA.org/locations for the address, schedule and fees.



POOL COVERS/LINERS

DISPOSAL

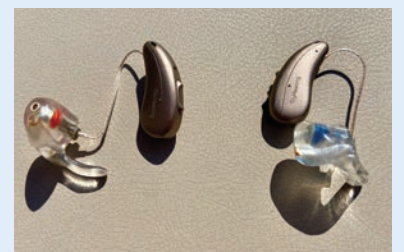
Plastic pool covers and liners belong in the trash. They are NOT recyclable in Onondaga County. Rather, they can interfere with the process of collecting, sorting and capturing recyclables. If the material does not fit in your curbside trash, pool covers and liners can be delivered to Rock Cut Road Transfer Station. Visit www.OCRRA.org/locations for location, schedule and entry fee information.



HEARING AIDS

REUSE

Many audiologists accept used hearing aids. Call in advance to determine if an audiologist near you requires them to be in good condition or if broken hearing aids are also acceptable.



DISPOSAL

If the hearing aid cannot be donated or brought to an audiologist, it may be put in the trash. Please remove the battery before disposal and manage that separately. Visit OCRRA.org/batteries for guidance.

Ready for a Winter Waste Cleanout?

Learn how to recycle, donate or dispose of seasonal supplies

Brian Height, Recycling Program Supervisor



Walk into any shed or garage in Central New York and you'll likely find a shovel, snow blower or antifreeze. The tools that help us survive Central New York winters don't last forever. When it is time to replace and get rid of old seasonal supplies, disposal guidance is always a click away at OCRRA.org. Here are a few tips to get you started!

LARGER ITEMS

- A snowblower that cannot be donated can be taken to Rock Cut Road Transfer Station in Jamesville. Fluids must be removed before drop-off.
- Shovels that are too large for your trash bin can also go to the transfer station. Scan the QR code on page 7 for location, schedule and fee information.

SMALLER ITEMS

- Ice scrapers and snow brushes that are no longer usable can be placed in your curbside trash bin.
- Small Shovels (plastic or metal) can also be thrown away. The Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, where Onondaga County's trash is managed, recovers roughly 12,000 tons of metal each year for recycling.
- Ice melt, rock salt, road salt or sodium chloride can be managed as trash.
- Winter clothes in good condition, including coats, can be donated to a local thrift store, such as the Rescue Mission, Salvation Army or Goodwill.
 - Clothes that have an odor or are contaminated with grease or mildew should be put in the trash.
 - The Rescue Mission also accepts clean and dry rags or mismatched socks, which can be repurposed (potentially as industrial rags or insulation). Drop them off in a bag labeled as "rags."

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

- Common household toxics, such as gasoline and diesel fuel, kerosene, lighter fluid, brake or transmission fluid, antifreeze, cleaning supplies, mothballs, herbicides and pesticides can be dropped off for free through OCRRA's Household Hazardous Waste Program.
 - The program is for Onondaga County residents only, no business waste, please.
 - An appointment is required (two are allowed annually). OCRRA pays a flat fee for every appointment, whether you bring one item or several. Help us keep the program free by reviewing the list of acceptable items and gathering your materials (and maybe a neighbor's too) for one appointment.
 - Visit OCRRA.org/toxics for details, including the drop-off location and quantity limits.

PAINT AND PAINT SUPPLIES

- Interior and exterior latex, acrylic, water-based, alkyd, oil-based and enamel paint (including textured coatings) are accepted for recycling through PaintCare. Other acceptable materials include primers, stains, sealers, shellacs and varnishes.
 - The program offers multiple drop-off locations and is free for residents and businesses. Visit PaintCare.org for drop-off locations..
 - Spray paints are not accepted by PaintCare, but can be managed through OCRRA's Household Hazardous Waste Program (see details above).



Holiday Reminders: Recycle, Reuse, Donate or Toss?

Emma Borys, Recycling Specialist

Happy Holidays, Onondaga County! 'Tis the season for sustainable celebrations. If you're hoping to reduce waste, creative gift ideas are a great first step. Concert tickets, cooking classes and recreation passes create low-waste memories and support local parks, venues and businesses.

Save money and wrap gifts with newspaper, paper bags or reusable fabric. If you buy wrapping paper, choose rolls that do NOT have metallic, foil or glitter designs; they cannot be recycled.

While opening gifts, keep trash and recycling containers nearby to instantly manage materials. First, review these reminders with your family to help everyone recycle right this holiday season.

CURBSIDE RECYCLING*

- Cardboard boxes
- Catalogs and magazines
- Disposable aluminum baking trays and foil (must be wiped clean, dry and wadded up into a ball)
- Gift boxes
- Greeting cards and envelopes
- Paper gift bags (no high-gloss bags; they get reused or go in the trash)
- Wrapping paper

**Items that have glitter, metallic or foil decorations cannot be recycled. They belong in the trash.*

DROP OFF FOR RECYCLING*

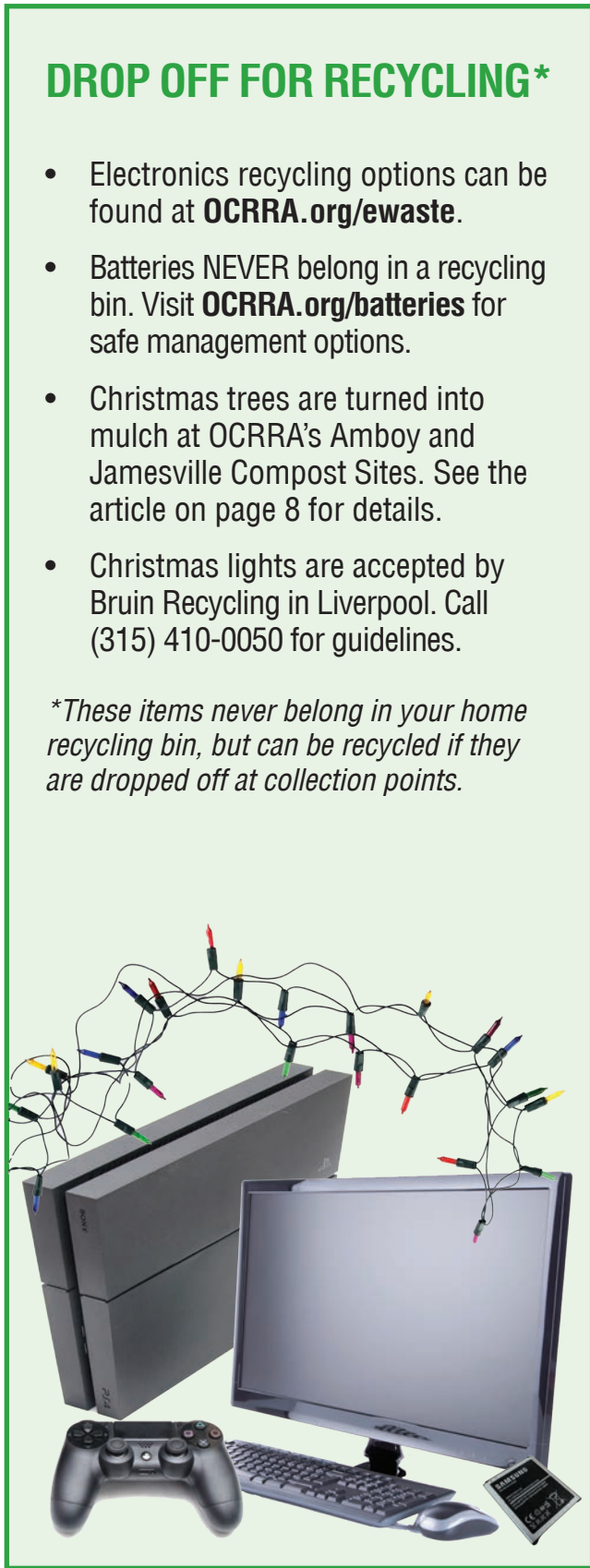
- Electronics recycling options can be found at OCRRA.org/ewaste.
- Batteries NEVER belong in a recycling bin. Visit OCRRA.org/batteries for safe management options.
- Christmas trees are turned into mulch at OCRRA's Amboy and Jamesville Compost Sites. See the article on page 8 for details.
- Christmas lights are accepted by Bruin Recycling in Liverpool. Call (315) 410-0050 for guidelines.

**These items never belong in your home recycling bin, but can be recycled if they are dropped off at collection points.*

REUSE OR TRASH*

- High-gloss gift bags
- Metallic, glitter or foil wrapping paper; greeting cards; gift bags and envelopes
- Ribbons and bows
- Tissue paper
- Toys (remove batteries first and manage them separately by visiting OCRRA.org/batteries for help)

**Donate items that are in good condition to reduce waste.*



ROCK CUT ROAD TRANSFER STATION 5808 Rock Cut Road | Jamesville, NY 13078

Residents must unload their own material.

Monday – Friday:
3:30 – 6 p.m.

Saturday:
8 a.m. – noon

Visit www.OCRRA.org/locations for fee information.

Christmas Tree Drop-offs in January

Taking down a beautifully decorated Christmas tree after the holidays can be a little sad, but there is still life left in your Douglas fir, spruce or pine. Every January at the Amboy and Jamesville Compost Sites, Christmas trees are transformed into mulch.

If your municipality does not offer pickup service (call your highway department to check) or if you simply need a drop-off option, OCRRA will accept real Christmas trees from January 5-16, Monday through Friday only (no weekends), 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at both of our compost sites.

No compost site drop-off pass is needed. Real Christmas tree drop-offs are free to Onondaga County residents. Only bare trees are accepted. Trees with decorations, including tinsel, plastic, metal and glass ornaments, will be turned away. All decorations must be removed prior to arrival.

Artificial trees do not belong at OCRRA Compost Sites. Some thrift stores will take them as donations, under certain conditions. Call ahead and check the store's policy before making a delivery. If your hauler does not accept artificial trees as trash, they may be dropped off at the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station for a fee. Visit www.OCRRA.org/locations for more details.



NEVER BAG RECYCLABLES

PLACE RECYCLING LOOSE IN YOUR BIN



DON'T BAG RECYCLING IN PAPER OR PLASTIC BAGS



Not sure if an item belongs in the trash or recycling bin? Use OCRRA's searchable database for guidance on hundreds of items.



Ready to test your knowledge with our holiday quiz?

Visit www.OCRRA.org/quiz to find out if you understand the rules for separating trash and recycling in Onondaga County.

Mark Your Calendar

AMBOY COMPOST SITE

OPEN MON-FRI
7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

www.OCRRA.org/locations

JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE

CLOSED FOR SEASON
(EXCEPT HOLIDAY TREES)

Reopens Spring 2026

HOLIDAY TREE **DROP-OFFS**

MON-FRI ONLY
Jan. 5–16

See Article for Details

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

ALL SITES CLOSED
Nov. 27, Dec. 25, Jan. 1

OCRRA.org/locations

FACT: Residents can get unlimited drop-offs of food and yard waste with OCRRA's annual compost site pass.