



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Reducing Holiday Waste

Fact Sheet

The holidays from Thanksgiving to New Years Day are a fun and hectic time of the year in the United States. That fun results in an average increase in household waste of more than 25 percent. We produce extra food waste, shopping bags, packaging, wrapping paper, bows and ribbons. During this time period in the United States, annual trash from just gift-wrap and shopping bags totals 4 million tons. We throw away 38,000 miles of ribbon which is long enough to tie a bow around the earth (US EPA and Use Less Stuff).

Is it possible to produce less waste during the holidays and still enjoy them to the fullest? Yes! Check out the holiday waste prevention ideas presented below. Any changes you make to reduce waste will save landfill space and resources.



Reducing Gift Wrapping Tips

- Design your own gift wrap using paper grocery or department store bags
- Purchase sturdy gift bags or containers that can be reused
- Save your gift boxes and use them again
- Wrap gifts in the comic or sports section of the newspaper
- Buy wrapping paper with recycled content

Other Helpful Holiday Waste Reduction Tips

- Set aside a box to collect reusable ribbons, bows, and other package decorations
- Save your holiday cards to cut up and use as gift tags for next year's gifts
- If you are replacing an old electronic device, donate it to a local charity or recycle it at a neighborhood electronic recycling event (See the Fact Sheet: Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Recycling)
- Consider making a home-cooked meal or baked goods as a special gift
- Try to limit the amount of packaging in the gifts you purchase
- When you are shopping, be sure to bring your own reusable bag