

# Trash Talk!



THURSTON COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

Public Works

Winter 2021



## Plastic Bag Ban = No More Plastic Shopping Bags

Beginning October 1, 2021, the state of Washington put special rules in place to stop the use of most single-use plastic shopping bags. For years, these types of plastic bags have polluted Washington State's recycling centers, waterways, roads, and environment. These kinds of plastic bags cannot be recycled at the curb, but they can be recycled at certain drop-off locations. There are less toxic, more easily reusable bags available.

To help stop both pollution and waste, Washington lawmakers created the single-use plastic bag ban. This means that, in most cases, plastic bags won't be given to customers at stores or

restaurants. Paper bags will still be available, but the stores will charge 8 cents per bag. Bringing reusable bags is free!

The single-use plastic bag ban was supposed to start in January 2021. The date was postponed due to supply concerns. The current statewide law replaces any local city or county plastic bag bans previously in place.

Why did Washington State ban plastic bags? On the Washington Department of Ecology's website, they explain:

- Every year Washingtonians use 2 billion single-use plastic bags.
- Plastic bags are a big problem in the recycling system.
- Plastic bags contain toxic chemicals.
- Plastic pollution poses both physical and chemical threats to the marine environment.
- Reusable bags or recyclable paper bags are better alternatives.

For more information, visit their website at [Ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Plastic-bag-ban](https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Plastic-bag-ban).



**NO**  
Single-use Plastic  
Carryout Bags



**8¢ charge**  
Large Paper  
Carryout Bags

Made with 40% recycled content.  
Charges must be retained by the business.



**8¢ charge**  
Thick Reusable Plastic  
Carryout Bags

Made with 20% recycled content and  
a minimum of 2.25 mil thick film.  
Charges must be retained by the business.



**Charge optional**  
Compostable Carryout  
Bags Allowed but  
**Not Recommended**  
Green or brown tinted film bags  
must be compostable.

**ban** – verb or noun – to  
prohibit or forbid something

**single-use** – adjective –  
something to be used only  
one time

## How Do I Clean My Reusable Bags?



Credit: Kai19 | iE+ | Getty Images

Keep your family healthy by washing your reusable bags regularly. Fabric bags can be placed into a washing machine or washed by hand with laundry detergent and then placed into the dryer or hung to dry. Reusable plastic shopping bags can be wiped with a disinfecting wipe or spray or washed by hand with warm, soapy water. Air-dry indoors or outdoors in the sun.

For added safety, clean bags after each use and especially after bringing home meat or seafood.

## Puzzling Clues

*Nicole and her sisters used sheets of leftover wrapping paper to make cards for their parents. Each girl used a different number of sheets of paper. Use the clues below to figure out how many sheets of paper each sister used.*

- A. Nicole used three sheets more than Gabriela.
- B. Gabriela used one sheet less than Ana.
- C. Camila used twice as many sheets as Ana.
- D. Ana used three sheets.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Which clue did you use first? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which clue did you use last? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who used the least amount of paper? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who used the most paper? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How much paper did each sister use? \_\_\_\_\_



Credit: DragonImages | iStock | Getty Images Plus



# Make Your Holiday Traditions Earth-Friendly



Credit: Aiselin82 | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Winter holidays and celebrations are tons of fun. But they leave behind a lot of extra trash — from Thanksgiving dinner's leftovers to gift wrap and boxes and New Year's Eve decorations. We love to celebrate with friends and family. We enjoy parties. We delight in giving gifts and sending holiday greeting cards. We can take better care of our earth during the holiday season and, at the same time, add even more fun. Here are some ideas for decreasing trash and making the best holiday memories yet!

## Decorating and Party Planning

- If you haven't made the switch yet, use LED lights for outside and inside decorating. They are 90% more efficient than other bulbs and will save money. They also last longer during the months of storage between holiday seasons, and they don't get hot, so they are safer.
- Decorate a tree in your yard or neighborhood for the birds. Hang seed bells, suet blocks, and pine cones covered in peanut butter and bird seed. Be sure to use a variety of wild bird seed, black oil sunflower seeds, and thistle. Then gather with your family to watch the varieties of birds that visit.
- When it's time to decorate inside, bring in the outside. Use strings of cranberries and popcorn to decorate mantles and trees. Bring in garlands of greenery from your own trees or a local nursery. They will add fresh smells and pretty colors to your home.
- Decorate your party table with seasonal plants that you can send home with guests as a gift.
- Be sure to place well-marked recycling containers to collect bottles and cans near trash cans and close to the food and drink tables. (Put bottle caps in the trash can.)
- Instead of using single-use paper

and plastic plates and serving products, use your party as an excuse to get out the fancy dishes and silverware. If your family doesn't own enough to serve all the guests, ask a neighbor or family member if you can borrow some. Setting the table with different types of plates and glasses can be fun and trendy.

- Share leftover food with your guests, sending them home with filled reusable containers.

## Giving and Receiving

- When thinking about giving and asking for gifts, think about things that don't require wrapping, like classes and experiences. How about a tap dancing class or music or art lessons? What about fun experiences, like movie or museum tickets?
- If you or your family is buying a gift, consider shopping online to save gas and time. Many websites offer free shipping at this time of year.
- Look for "frustration-free" packaging. Items will arrive with no wires, ties, or hard-to-remove plastic, which means less trash. While you are ordering, select an option for multiple orders to be shipped together on one day. This results in fewer boxes to recycle and fewer delivery trucks in your neighborhood.
- If you choose to wrap gifts, consider clever, reusable materials instead of traditional wrapping paper. For example, you might use the Sunday Comics pages, coloring book pages, old maps, stenciled brown paper and twine, cloth napkins and place mats, kitchen towels, or even scarves. Purchased gift bags are an alternative that can be stored and reused year after year.
- When you receive new items, donate the old ones you are replacing instead of throwing them into the trash.

Trying some of these new holiday habits will create good memories and help take care of our earth. For more ideas, visit these websites:

- [Metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/reduction-reuse/create-memories](http://Metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/reduction-reuse/create-memories)
- [Blogs.cdc.gov/yourhealthyenvironment/2018/12/10/go-green-for-the-holidays-2/](http://Blogs.cdc.gov/yourhealthyenvironment/2018/12/10/go-green-for-the-holidays-2/)
- [Discovery.com/nature/go-green-for-the-holidays](http://Discovery.com/nature/go-green-for-the-holidays)



## Donate Holiday Cards for Recycling

St. Jude's Ranch for Children recycles used cards and creates new holiday cards, as well as other greeting cards for any occasion. The program is beneficial to everyone — old cards are recycled; customers receive fun, "green" cards that they can feel good sending; and the teens at St. Jude's Ranch learn basic job skills and receive payment for their work.

Visit [Stjudesranch.org/recycled-card-program/](http://Stjudesranch.org/recycled-card-program/) for details.

## From Trash to Treasure Box



Credit: Imagothand | iStock | Getty Images Plus

**You know what is even better than recycling? Reuse! Here is a fun way to reuse old 2-liter bottles and turn them into a treasure box. For this craft, you will need two 2-liter bottles, duct tape, glue, scissors, a bead, string or yarn, and paint, stickers, markers, or other items to use to decorate.**

1. Clean both 2-liter bottles thoroughly with dish soap and water. Dry the outside and turn them upside down to allow the inside to dry out. Let them sit for a day or two.
2. Have an adult cut about three inches above the bottom of a bottle in a full circle to separate the top and the bottom. Do the same on the other bottle. Discard the tops of the bottles in the trash and keep the bottoms. Trim to make sure there are no sharp edges.
3. Put the bottom parts of each bottle together so that the cut edges are touching each other.
4. Cut a piece of duct tape about 1 inch square. Place it on the outside of the bottles where the openings touch.
5. Cut another piece of duct tape about 1 inch square. Lift the top bottle, using the tape you placed on the outside as a hinge. Place the second piece of duct tape inside the bottles over the same area as the first piece.
6. Close the bottles together again.
7. On the side opposite from the tape, glue the bead to the bottom bottle, about half an inch below the opening.
8. Cut a piece of yarn or string, long enough to loop from half an inch above the opening down and around the bead. Glue the two ends of the string or yarn half an inch above the opening. This will serve as a latch to seal the box.
9. Leave the glue to dry for about a day.
10. Decorate the inside and outside of the box however you like! Use paint, stickers, markers, colorful duct tape, or other items to make it unique.
11. Put treasures in your box or give it as a gift!

# Don't Trash Old Electronics — Reuse or Recycle Instead

You may be surprised to learn that the average American home has about 28 electronic products, such as personal computers, mobile phones, televisions, and electronic readers (e-readers). In an average home, about 12 of these electronic devices are connected to the internet — a number that experts predict will increase to 20 by 2025.

If you stop and think carefully, you may find that you own at least one of them and maybe more. What is your favorite? Do you text your friends and family from a cell phone? Does your home have a smart speaker? Do you and your friends play games on a big TV with a controller like Xbox or Nintendo Switch? Maybe you like to read on an e-reader or access the internet on a tablet or laptop?

When these electronic gadgets break or your family chooses to upgrade them, remember most should not go into the trash. Electronic waste is also known as e-waste. There are dangerous chemicals and metals inside e-waste that can harm our environment. So what can you do when it is time to get rid of the electronic devices you no longer want or need?

First, think about whether you or someone else could fix a broken device and reuse or sell it. If you like to try new things, visit iFixit.com. This website provides instructions for how to fix cell phones, game consoles, laptops, and more. For safety, only try to make repairs working with a parent or trusted adult. If the device still works, consider having a parent or trusted adult sell it through an online marketplace or use a website like Gazelle, which allows you to mail in devices in exchange for cash. Local game stores may also offer cash or trade-ins for games and consoles. Call them and ask.

If you can't fix it, sell it, or give it away, be sure to recycle it. Certain types of e-waste can be “e-cycled” for free through the E-Cycle Washington program. Visit [ecyclewashington.org](http://ecyclewashington.org) to find a drop-off location near you.



Credit: PrathanChorruangsak | iStock | Getty Images Plus

If you are up for a service project, ask your teacher or principal if you can organize a cell phone drive at your school. Kids can encourage their parents, grandparents, and even neighbors to donate old, unused cell phones to the school. Encourage all people donating their phones to completely erase their personal data from the phones first. Search online for “cell phone recycling fundraiser” or “cell phone recycling charity” for ways that donations can raise money for school projects or help people in need.

Look around your house and notice how many electronics are in use and how many are sitting in a drawer or closet somewhere. Is it time to find a new use for some old devices or recycle e-waste?



## Supplying the Demand

*The questions below help you explore how supply and demand affect prices. Read and answer each question.*

- The newest book in an awesome series just came out, but each bookstore only gets a few copies to sell.  
A. Is the supply high or low? \_\_\_\_\_  
B. How will this affect the price? \_\_\_\_\_
- During the holiday season, the price for a popular new toy increases because lots of kids want it.  
A. Is the demand for this toy high or low? \_\_\_\_\_  
B. Why does this affect the price? \_\_\_\_\_
- The secondhand store has an entire shelf of video games that came out before 2015.  
A. Is the supply high or low? \_\_\_\_\_  
B. How will this affect the price? \_\_\_\_\_
- Previously Loved, a shop featuring used toys, has lowered the price on stuffed pillow animals.  
A. Is the supply high or low? \_\_\_\_\_  
B. How will lowering the price affect the supply? \_\_\_\_\_
- If something is in high demand and low supply, is the price more likely to go up or down?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If an item is in low demand and high supply, is the price more likely to go up or down?  
\_\_\_\_\_



Credit: photosvit | iStock | Getty Images Plus

**Bonus:** The levels of supply and demand affect the price of goods. Could they also affect the price of services? If yes, why? Can you think of an example?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# TreeCycle Your Holiday Tree!



Credit: lsegagne | E+ | Getty Images

The holiday season will be here soon! If your family enjoys a live, cut tree at this time of year, think now about what you'll do with it after the holidays. Did you know that holiday trees can be chipped into small pieces and used as mulch on paths and in gardens or to make compost? This is a form of recycling, which we like to call TreeCycling, and you can do it for free! To recycle your tree, remove all ornaments, lights, and other decorations, as well as the tree stand. No matter where you live in Thurston County, you can recycle your tree for free! In some areas, trees will be picked up at the curb. Trees being picked up which are more than 6 feet tall must be cut in half.

Other residents will be able to drop off trees. Please visit [WhereDoITakeMy.org](http://WhereDoITakeMy.org) to find out where to recycle trees in your area.

Tree limbs, boughs, or other greenery will be accepted at the Yard Debris Site at the Waste and Recovery Center at 2420 Hogum Bay NE in Lacey from Sunday, December 26, to Sunday, January 16 (closed Saturday, January 1). The center is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

If you have a real tree attached to a ball of dirt and roots, replant it. Be sure to give your tree the best chance to thrive by digging a good-sized hole before the ground freezes.

If you have an artificial tree, carefully pack it up for next year. If you'll be replacing it next year, donate the old one to a charitable resale store, like Goodwill, so that it can be used by others.

## Where Can I Reuse, Recycle, or Dispose Of \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Have you ever wondered where to take a cell phone, old mattress, Styrofoam, or any particular item to be reused, recycled, or thrown away properly? Visit our updated "Where Do I Take My?" search engine at [WhereDoITakeMy.org](http://WhereDoITakeMy.org). Just fill in the blank with the item you want to reuse, recycle, or throw away, and get an answer. Thanks for doing your part to help us care for the environment!



## Time After Time



Credit: kate\_sept2004 | E+ | Getty Images

*A time capsule is a container that holds items from a certain place and time. Time capsules are usually buried or built into a sealed place and meant to be opened many years later. They show people in the future what life was like when the time capsule was buried.*

A time capsule was found in Sam's backyard. It was buried the same year that The Salvation Army was created in London, England. That year, The Salvation Army began collecting, sorting, and offering unwanted goods for reuse. Add the number of articles found to discover what year The Salvation Army began their work and when the capsule was buried.

- |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| 242 Coins      | 826 Socks |
| 137 Newspapers | 660 Nails |
1. What was the year? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Why was the creation of The Salvation Army important in managing waste? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Funded by Thurston County Public Works, Solid Waste Division

### Thurston County Public Works Solid Waste Division

9605 Tilley Road S, Suite C ♦ Olympia, WA 98512  
360-867-2491 ♦ [SolidWasteYouth@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:SolidWasteYouth@co.thurston.wa.us) ♦ [ThurstonSolidWaste.org](http://ThurstonSolidWaste.org)

