



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**IOWA DNR**

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## DNR offers tips to reduce waste this holiday season

**DES MOINES** – The holiday season is a time for spending with family and friends and giving and receiving gifts. This is also the most waste-generated time of the year.

According to Stanford University, Americans throw away 25% more trash from Thanksgiving to New Years, which adds an additional 1 million pounds of waste going to the landfill per week.

If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the planet. If every family wrapped three of the gifts they give in reusable materials like using the newspaper comics pages, magazines, etc., it would save enough paper to cover approximately 45,000 football fields.

According to the 2017 Iowa Statewide Waste Characterization Study, overall, cardboard was the fifth most landfilled material out of the 62 sort categories. The total amount of cardboard landfilled in Iowa was approximately 84,200 tons. Based on a current market value of \$51 per ton of cardboard, that adds up to \$4.3 million dollars.

Consider these holiday savings tips from the EPA and others:

- **Consider the source.** Choose recycled or sustainable sourced materials. Shop local to support area shops, makers, and artisans while reducing shipping costs and impacts.
- **Rethink the wrap.** Reuse maps, comics, newsprint, kid art, or posters as gift wrap. Wrap gifts in recycled paper or a reusable bag. Or skip the gift wrap, hide the gifts, and leave clues or trails for kids to follow. Believe it or not, despite Christmas paper being typically made of paper, most of the time you can't actually recycle it. Forget the foil and glittery paper this Christmas and opt for a more subtle style.
- **Keep it simple.** For larger gatherings, choose recyclable or compostable service items. All food-soiled paper products are commercially compostable, unless plastic- or foil-coated.
- **Reuse** packing and shipping materials. Save ribbons, bows, boxes, bags, and décor for the next holiday.
- **Recycle** old electronics and batteries.
- **Compost** your food scraps.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources wishes you and your family a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

