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HOLIDAY Zero Waste Guide 2025

Celebrate the season with more joy and less waste—here's how!

Skip the Stuff

Gift experiences or services instead of new stuff—think memberships, housecleaning, donations, or online classes. Edible gifts in reusable jars are great, too. If you buy products, choose waste-reducers like reusable bottles, mugs, or to-go containers.

Zero Waste Gift Wrapping

Traditional wrapping paper is tough to recycle because it contains more clay and ink than paper fiber. Dress your gifts in something greener: reusable bags, fabric, or recyclable kraft-paper wrapping paper. Get creative with what you already have—comics, maps, posters, even last year's calendars. Shipping gifts? Cushion packages with crumpled paper instead of foam or bubble wrap.

Use LED Holiday Lights

Incandescent holiday lights burn through energy fast! Recycle those old strands at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials and upgrade to LEDs instead. They use about 80% less energy, last up to 25 times longer, and keep your holidays bright without the big energy bill.

Sustainable Gift Tags & Cards

Deck the halls—and your gifts—the sustainable way! Use last year's holiday cards to make gift tags or table cards. Sharing greetings? Go for e-cards or simple paper cards. Anything printed on photo paper or covered in foil, glitter, or ribbons can't be recycled, so simpler designs keep more holiday magic out of the landfill.

Stop Junk Mail

The holidays often bring a blizzard of catalogs and glossy mail telling us to buy more stuff. You don't have to let it pile up. When an unwanted catalog arrives, call the 1-800 number listed inside and ask to be removed from their mailing list—it's fast, free, and reduces waste all year long. Learn more tricks, including six steps to getting and staying off mailing lists, at ecocycle.org/junk-mail.

Recharge It!

Every year, more than 15 billion batteries are produced worldwide—most of them single-use alkaline batteries that end up in the trash. Switch to rechargeables instead; newer models can power up in as little as 15 minutes.

Make Gatherings Zero Waste

Let your holiday table shine without the waste! Use real dishes instead of disposables—borrow from friends or build a delightful thrift-store set just for the season. Decorate by bringing the outdoors in with foraged branches, evergreen sprigs, gourds, squash, and bowls of colorful fruit. And before you cook, visit savethefood.com for simple tools that help you plan portions and prevent food waste.

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Building Zero Waste Communities

CITY OF BOULDER

Download this guide in English and Spanish at ecocycle.org/zero-waste-holiday

Recycle Your Holiday Leftovers!

Paper Shopping Bags & Cardboard Boxes

RECYCLE curbside or at drop-off centers. Large staples & shiny graphics OK. **REMOVE non-paper handles (synthetic string, etc.) and metal grommets.**

Tissue Paper

No longer compostable in curbside bins. Reuse if possible, compost at home, or put in trash.

Food Scraps

COMPOST in curbside bins and at these drop-off centers:

- **Eco-Cycle CHaRM;** facility fees apply
- **Longmont Recycling Center**
- **Nederland Transfer Station & Recycling Drop-Off Center**

Cooking Oil

RECYCLE AT THESE LOCATIONS ONLY, NOT in curbside bins:

- **Eco-Cycle CHaRM;** facility fees apply
- **Longmont Recycling Center**

Plastic Bags

Includes grocery bags, dry-cleaner bags, and zip-top baggies (no zip pouches from prepackaged foods).
RECYCLE AT THESE LOCATIONS ONLY, NOT in curbside bins:

- **Eco-Cycle CHaRM**; facility fees apply
- **Longmont Recycling Center**
- Find other locations at **ecocycle.org/a-z-guide**

Bags must be clean, dry, and empty. NO tape. Plastic bags are NOT recyclable in curbside bins.

Holiday Cards

REUSE cards as next year's gift tags or place-setting cards.
RECYCLE in curbside bins and at drop-off centers. **NO cards embossed with foil or other non-paper material. NO ribbons, photos, or photo paper.**

Dark Envelopes

TRASH; NOT RECYCLABLE.
Dark-colored envelopes such as reds and greens are not recyclable or compostable curbside or at drop-off centers.

White and Light-Colored Paper Envelopes

Recyclable in your single-stream curbside bin.

Electronics & Appliances

RECYCLE AT THESE LOCATIONS:

- **Eco-Cycle CHaRM**; facility fees apply
- **an e-Steward certified recycler**—find one at **e-stewards.org/find-a-recycler**

Disposing of electronics in the trash is illegal in Colorado.

Batteries

RECYCLE AT THESE LOCATIONS ONLY, NOT in curbside bins:
Rechargeable Batteries:

- **Boulder County Hazardous Materials Management Facility**
- **Longmont Recycling Center**

Alkaline Batteries:

- **Boulder County Hazardous Materials Management Facility**

Holiday String Lights & Extension Cords

RECYCLE AT THESE LOCATIONS ONLY, NOT in curbside bins:

- **Eco-Cycle CHaRM**; facility fees apply
- **Longmont Recycling Center**

Attached light bulbs are OK. **Please bundle cords & tie with the loose end so they don't get caught in machinery.**

#6 White Block Foam

(aka Styrofoam®)
RECYCLE AT THESE LOCATIONS ONLY, NOT in curbside bins:

- **Eco-Cycle CHaRM**; facility fees apply
- **Longmont Recycling Center**

This is the material typically used to package computers, TVs, large appliances, etc.

NO food-grade foam (to-go containers, meat trays, egg cartons, disposable cups, etc.), tape, packing peanuts (see listing), bubble wrap (see listing), bendable foam, any foam other than #6, or any color other than white.

Packing Peanuts

REUSE ONLY, NOT RECYCLABLE.
Take to packing & shipping stores; find locations at **ecocycle.org/a-z-guide**.

Bubble Wrap

RECYCLE AT **Eco-Cycle CHaRM, Longmont Recycling Center,** and participating plastic film recycling collections, NOT in curbside bins.

Drop-Off Centers in Boulder County

Boulder County Recycling Center
1901 63rd St., Boulder; open 24 hours

Boulder County Hazardous Materials Management Facility (HMMF)
1901 63rd St., Boulder
Open Wed–Sat, 8:30 am–4 pm; Tues. for business waste by appointment only; closed Sun–Mon.
bouldercounty.gov/environment/hazardous-waste/management-facility

Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM)
6400 Arapahoe Rd., Boulder
Open Mon–Sat, 9 am–5 pm; closed Sundays
Fees apply to drop off materials. To learn more, visit ecocycle.org/charm

Longmont Waste Diversion Center
140 Martin St., Longmont
Longmont residents only. Bring ID & recent utility bill.
Staffed hours: Mon–Sat, 8 am–4 pm
Single-stream recycling drop-off open 24/7.
longmontcolorado.gov/waste-services-trash-recycling-composting/longmont-recycling-center/

Nederland Drop-Off Center
286 Ridge Road, Nederland
Hours: Thurs–Tues, 8 am–4 pm
Closed Dec 24, Dec 25, Dec 31, and Jan 1.
bouldercounty.org/environment/trash/nederland-transfer-and-recycle

Niwot Transfer Station & Recycling Drop-Off Ctr.
Niwot Loop Trailhead (north of Hwy 52 on N. 79th St)
Hours: Open dawn to dusk

Allenspark Transfer Station & Recycling Drop-Off Ctr.
14857 State Highway 7
Open Sun, Mon, Wed, Fri: 10 am–4 pm
bouldercounty.org/environment/trash/allenspark-transfer-and-recycle/

Lyons Drop-Off Recycling Center
198 2nd Ave, on the south side of the lot.
Open daily, 7 am–7 pm
townoflyons.com/369/Sustainability-Resources-Waste

Tree Recycling Programs

Remove all decor, tinsel, lights, stands, wire, etc.

Boulder County/City of Boulder: Accepting trees from City of Boulder and Boulder County residents for free from 12/26/25–1/31/26 at Western Disposal, 2051 63rd St. Trees can be picked up curbside on your residential compost day until Jan 31 (if tree is longer than 6 ft, please cut the top off and place in the compost bin).

Erie: Accepting trees of less than a 12-inch diameter year-round (weather permitting). Open daily, 8 am–4 pm, 1000 Briggs St., Erie. ID required.

Lafayette: Republic Services will pick up Christmas trees for composting curbside during weekly residential service January–March. Trees must be cut to 4 ft. in length and bundled with rope or twine.

Louisville: Accepting trees 1/3/26 ONLY, 8 am–2 pm at the Branch Recycling Site. Louisville ID required. Trees can also be collected on your residential curbside compost day if cut into pieces that fit in the cart with the lid closed.

Longmont: Accepting trees at the Recycling Center year-round; Mon–Sat, 8 am–4 pm.

Superior: Accepting trees 12/26/25–1/31/26, 8 am–5 pm daily at 2125 Honey Creek Lane.