



Skyler Bailey tosses a tree onto a trailer at a tree recycling location at the Walmart on Commercial Street SE in Sunday, December 2012.

STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

How to keep your holiday trimmings out of the trash

Tracy Loew

Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

'Tis the season for food, family and extra trash.

Americans throw away 25% more garbage than usual between Thanksgiving and New Year's, according to the nonprofit National Environmental Education Foundation.

That includes 15 million used Christmas trees, \$11 billion worth of packing materials and 38,000 miles of ribbon – enough to wrap around the entire planet.

Knowing what to do with all that waste became more difficult in 2018 when China stopped taking most recycling from the United States. Marion County drastically reduced the range of items it accepts for recycling, and local haulers began fining residents for doing it wrong.

"Knowing where and how to properly dispose of items that come with the holidays can help in reducing the amount of materials that needlessly end up in the trash, while also assuring that our recovery and recycling processes can run smoothly," Yancy Gordon, Marion County Public Works spokeswoman, said.

Here's a brief guide to keeping some of your holiday trimmings out of the trash.

Real trees and wreaths

Remove all the ribbons, lights and ornaments, and cut it up to fit in your yard cart.

Alternatively, you can take it to either the Salem-Keizer or North Marion recycling and transfer stations for a \$3 fee during January.

There are also some local groups, including the Boy Scouts, that let you drop off or even will pick up your tree for a small donation.

Flocked trees and wreaths

These can't be recycled. Put in the trash.

Artificial trees and wreaths

These can't be recycled, but may be accepted at some resale stores.

Gift wrap and holiday cards

These can be put in the blue mixed-waste recycling bin, with the exception of wrapping paper that is shiny or slick, ribbons, bows or anything with glitter.

Holiday cards that are shiny, have glitter or use photo paper also cannot be recycled.

Leftover food and food waste

Residents in Salem city limits can put food waste into their yard waste cart.

This includes common holiday fare like fruit and vegetable scraps, meats

and proteins (including bones), and non-liquid dairy products.

Small amounts of used oil, fats and grease can be disposed of in a container with a lid by placing it in the trash. For larger quantities of oil, residents who have the small red recycling bins can place up to two gallons of used oil in the bin as long as it is in a clear plastic container with a tight-fitting lid. Don't dump it down kitchen drains and garbage disposals or outdoors near storm drains.

Packaging materials

Cardboard boxes can go in the mixed recycling bin.

Styrofoam blocks can be recycled for free at Fresh Start Market, 3020 Center St. NE. It does not accept meat trays, egg cartons or take-out containers.

Packing peanuts can be taken to some mailing stores, such as UPS and FedEx. Call first to check whether they are accepting them.

Christmas lights

Lights can be dropped off for free at the electronics recycling area at Salem-Keizer or North Marion recycling and transfer stations.

If you're upgrading to LED lights, you can recycle your incandescent lights at holidayLED-S.com, and get a coupon toward a purchase.

Household batteries

Place in a zip-sealed bag in the small red recycling bin. For those outside city limits, there are nearly 30 locations where batteries can be dropped off for free.

Check the county's recycle guide, at www.co.marion.or.us/PW/ES/disposal/programs/recycling/, for more information.

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Have you been called about jury duty? It may be a scam

Whitney Woodworth

Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Court officials are reporting another string of scam calls, emails and texts to Oregonians threatening them with fines, prosecution or jail time for failing to report for jury duty.

According to the Oregon Judicial Department, most of the recent reports of the scams are from the Willamette Valley, but other areas may also be targeted.

"In these calls, emails, or texts, recipients are pressured to provide confidential data such as bank account information, credit card numbers, date of birth or social security numbers, potentially leading to identity theft and fraud," Oregon Judicial Department staff said in a statement. "These fraudulent calls or messages – which threaten recipients with fines and jail time if they do not comply – are not connected with the state or federal courts."

State and federal courts do not require anyone to provide sensitive information in a telephone call, email or text.

Officials stressed that Oregon state courts may provide jury notices and reminders by text but would never request personal information, make threats or demand money.

They advised people receiving the bogus jury-related telephone call, email or text demanding information or money to not provide the requested information or payment, reply directly to the text or email, click on any links or open any attachments – even if it appears that the message is coming from the court or a local police agency.

"Scammers can often create messages that look like they are coming from a legitimate source," court officials said. "If possible, get the caller's name and number and then

"Scammers can often create messages that look like they are coming from a legitimate source. If possible, get the caller's name and number and then hang up."

Oregon Judicial Department statement

hang up."

Those targeted are advised to reach out directly to the local court to verify or report the contact.

For state courts, including the circuit courts in each Oregon county, report the call or contact to the local circuit court jury coordinator immediately.

"Jury duty is a vital civic responsibility and should be taken seriously by all citizens," court officials said. "However, it is a crime for anyone to falsely represent himself or herself as a state or federal court official."

Contact information for Oregon's state circuit courts is available at courts.oregon.gov/courts.

For Oregon's federal courts, information about jury service and possible scams is available at ord.uscourts.gov/jurors.

Those who gave out personal information during the scams are advised to monitor their account statements and credit reports carefully.

If any unauthorized charges are made, they should report the theft to local law enforcement and the Federal Trade Commission at 877-438-4338 or consumer.gov/idtheft and contact a credit bureau to request that it place a fraud alert on their credit history.

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at umwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com, call 503-910-6616 or follow on Twitter @umwoodworth



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GETTY IMAGES

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