



## Are Your Recyclables Being Thrown Out at the Curb? No.

Dale Cocca, Recycling Specialist

A phone call comes in Tuesday morning: “Why should I bother recycling? I just watched my trash guy throw my recyclables in the same truck as the trash!”

OCRRA appreciates that there are citizens out there keeping an eye on what is happening at the curb, because it is hard for OCRRA to closely monitor ALL collection routes.

The good news is that those recyclables are, more likely than not, on their way to the recycling sorting facility. While it is true that, on rare occasions, a trash hauler may be mixing recyclables with trash, in most cases it just LOOKS like trash and recyclables are being mixed. Many waste hauling trucks utilize a design style known as a “split body.” These truck bodies are split down the middle so that trash can be collected in one side and recyclables can be collected in the other. This style of truck was conceived not to confuse the resident observ-



Split body trucks allow haulers to make one trip to efficiently collect trash AND recycling. The truck on the right is a rear loading split body truck, while the one on the left is a side loading split body truck. Unless you are very close to the action, it can be difficult to tell that the trash and recycling are going in to separate compartments and therefore can easily be dropped off at two different locations. If you get a close look and feel your hauler is mixing your trash and recycling together, call OCRRA at (315) 453-2866.

collecting recycling and trash at the same time.

There are actually two varieties of split body trucks: rear load and side load. It is a little easier to tell what is happening with a rear load truck. The side load variety can be tricky to verify from inside your home. Regardless of the loading location, each compartment has a separate compactor. The recyclables are not actually mixed with the trash at all.

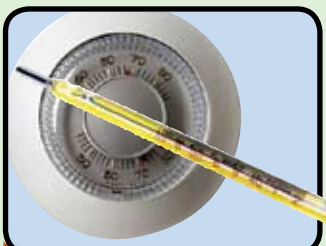
This style of truck was conceived not to confuse the resident observ-

ing pickup, but to increase route efficiency for waste haulers, so each house did not need to be visited twice. These trucks were popularized after the advent of “single stream” recycling, where paper and cardboard could be mixed with other recyclables. Not all haulers use these trucks, but they are very common.

So, next time you see your trash and recycling get tossed into the same truck, go out and take a close look. If it is all going into a single compartment, give

OCRRA a call at (315) 453-2866, so we can resolve the issue. But, more than likely you will get a first-hand peek at just what a split body hauling truck looks like – and you can rest easy knowing that your recycling will make its way to the sorting facility and live another life as a new product!

Dale Cocca can be reached at [dcocca@ocrra.org](mailto:dcocca@ocrra.org).



### MERCURY THERMS... PG 2

Covanta exchanges your therms for a \$10 gift card on Aug. 3.



### ALKALINE BATTERIES ..... PG 3

Put them at your curb in July in a yellow bag.



### COMPOST & MULCH ..... PG 4

Get it delivered to your home or pick it up yourself onsite.



### PLASTIC BAGS ..... PG 7

They are about to disappear; find out how a new NYS law will impact you in 2020.



### PLASTICS RECYCLING ..... PG 8

Get the 411 on what should really go in your recycling bin and what should go in the trash.



## Earth Day Success!



Photo Credit: Erica Hasenjaeger Photography, Syracuse, 2019.

Members of the Town Shop Youth Center show what they collected when they cleaned up Newport Road in Camillus during the 2019 Earth Day Litter Cleanup.

More than 6,300 people registered to clean up litter for the event that took place on April 26 and 27. Despite some inclement weather, more than 60,600 pounds of litter were removed, which helped beautify Onondaga County!

### Did You Know?

You do not have to wait until next Earth Day to pick up litter. Grab a bag when you head out to walk your dog or your kids (or yourself) and help save the world a little each day!

# Mercury Therms Collection Event at New Location on Sat. 8/3

Drop off mercury thermometers & thermostats and get a \$10 Lowe's gift card from Covanta

Chanel Quail, Recycling Specialist

Mercury, if not properly managed, can harm humans and the environment. That is why OCRRA and Covanta are hosting a mercury thermometer and thermostat takeback event on **Saturday, August 3 from 8 am until 11 am** at Environmental Products and Services of Vermont (532 State Fair Blvd, Syracuse, NY 13204 – near the 690 West on ramp).

Covanta, the entity that operates the local Waste-to-Energy Facility, is donating a \$10 gift card from Lowe's to everyone who brings items in; one gift card per resident drop-off, regardless of the number of mercury items turned in at the event. If a thermometer is dropped off, Covanta will provide a mercury-free, digital thermometer replacement. This free event is for **household items from Onondaga County only**.

Residents must complete a drop-off form before arriving and place it on their vehicle's dash

to expedite their visit the day of the event. The form may be cut out below or accessed at **OCRRA.org**.

How can you tell if your thermometer or thermostat contains mercury? Mercury **thermometers** have SILVER, METALLIC GREY or BLACK filling in their bulbs. Any other color filling indicates it is a non-mercury thermometer and it may be thrown in the trash.

Mercury **thermostats** have dials or levers that you need to manually adjust. If you take their faceplate off and see one or more glass vials containing a silver substance, you have a mercury thermostat.

**Unable to make the drop-off event?** Bring mercury thermostats and thermometers to **OCRRA's Ley Creek Transfer Station**, year-round and get a \$5 Lowe's gift card (and mercury-free thermometer, if applicable) in the mail. Ley Creek is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 am to 1:30 pm and Saturdays,



Photo Credit: Klineberg Photography, Syracuse, 2018.

Sharon Hunter of Syracuse drops off her mercury thermometer at the 2018 Mercury event and receives a new digital thermometer from Kim LaCoe of the NYSDEC, as well as a \$10 gift card to Lowe's from Kathy Carroll of Covanta. Turn in your mercury thermometers and thermostats during the 2019 event taking place on Saturday, August 3 at Environmental Products and Services from 8:00 am until 11:00 am.

8:00 am to 11:30 am.

“Did you know one mercury thermostat contains the same amount of mercury (4 grams) as about 800 compact fluorescent bulbs? While mercury thermometers contain less mercury, both items need to be removed from the waste

stream to protect humans and wildlife,” said Kathleen Carroll, Covanta Onondaga client-waste solutions manager. “Covanta is excited to offer gift cards at this event which reward the outstanding efforts of Onondaga County residents who turn in mercury

containing devices.”

Do your part to protect our health, and keep mercury out of the waste and water on Saturday, August 3, and help “save the world a little each day®.”

Chanel Quail can be reached at [cquail@ocrra.org](mailto:cquail@ocrra.org).

## Mercury Therm Drop-Off Form

Complete this form in advance.  
Place it on your vehicle's dash on the day of the event.

Name:

Street:

Town:  Zip Code:

Phone:

Email\*:

\*By providing your email address you are confirming that you want to be on OCRRA's email list (which keeps you up-to-date on OCRRA's services and upcoming events). You may unsubscribe at any time.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of THERMOMETERS Dropped Off:



Number of THERMOSTATS Dropped Off:



## July is Alkaline Battery Collection Month

Dale Cocca, Recycling Specialist

Did you know in Onondaga County you cannot put batteries in the trash (or recycling bin)? That is why OCRRA made July “Alkaline Battery Month.”

In July, all those dead alkaline batteries can be placed in an OCRRA-provided yellow bag and set on TOP of your trash for proper disposal. Haulers collect the batteries, separate from your trash, and deliver them to OCRRA for proper management.

The July program requires the use of OCRRA’s yellow battery collection bag; the program is not for all batteries, it is only for alkaline batteries.

**Alkaline batteries** come in many different shapes and sizes. They are the typical household batteries used in a remote control, radio, toy, smoke detector, etc. (AA, AAA, C, D, 6V, 9V). Alkaline batteries cannot be recharged. Nearly all

alkaline batteries say the word “alkaline” on them.

To get an OCRRA battery bag, email OCRRA at [info@OCRRA.org](mailto:info@OCRRA.org); be sure to tell us your name and mailing address.

Button or rechargeable batteries are NOT accepted in the July collection.

**Button batteries** are small, flat, circular batteries often found in hearing aids, watches, calculators, etc.

**Rechargeable batteries** are found in power tools, laptops, phones and other electronic equipment. Some rechargeables look like alkalines; check the label to determine if they are rechargeable. Batteries that say “rechargeable,” “lithium” or mention another type of metal such as “Hg,” “Ni,” “Cd,” “Li-Ion,” etc., do not belong in the July battery bag.

Year-round, these other batteries can be taken to OCRRA’s battery collec-

tion kiosks at any Wegmans in Onondaga County. All household batteries (alkaline included) are accepted at these kiosks, which are located in the foyer of each Wegmans store. **A yellow bag is not required to drop off at a Wegmans kiosk.** Just make sure to keep button or coin shaped batteries separate from the rechargeables and separate from the alkaline batteries. Each type of battery needs to be deposited into a separate compartment in the kiosk.

This means alkaline, button and rechargeable batteries can be properly managed year-round! Just remember to grab them on the way out the door and drop them off on your next trip to get groceries.

In 2018, more than 121,000 pounds of alkaline batteries were collected through OCRRA’s battery program. When looking at the year-round collection,



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Syracuse, 2019.

Gray Mathieson of Syracuse shows how to properly set alkaline batteries out for curbside collection, by placing them in an OCRRA provided yellow bag and putting them on top of his trash can in the month of July. Email OCRRA at [info@OCRRA.org](mailto:info@OCRRA.org) to get a free yellow battery recycling bag today!

in total 65 tons of batteries were collected, including over 6,150 pounds of rechargeable batteries. Residents in Onondaga County are now recycling

more rechargeable batteries per capita than any other large community in New York State.

Dale Cocca can be reached at [dcocca@ocrra.org](mailto:dcocca@ocrra.org).



Dear Rhoda,

I’ve been inspired by the popular “tidying up” trend, where you get rid of household clutter that doesn’t bring you joy. So, I’m cleaning my basement.

I know what to do with the cardboard (flatten it and recycle it) and the obvious trash items (throw them out), but what should I do with my leftover (ancient) paints, old adhesives, toxic cleaners and garden pesticides?

Finding Joy in Jordan

Dear Joy,

Thank goodness for Netflix documentaries! Marie Kondo’s “Tidying Up” has

sparked a new wave of house cleaning, which has been wonderful for local charity donation organizations as well as the environment. While we are talking about it, one thing that has likely never sparked joy for anyone, ever, is household hazardous waste. What is one supposed to do with unwanted, joy-sucking, toxic household products in Onondaga County? Get rid of them at no charge through OCRRA’s year-round Household Toxics Disposal Program!

To participate in OCRRA’s program, simply

## Recycling Rhoda

## Household Toxics

make an appointment at [www.OCRRA.org](http://www.OCRRA.org), or call (315) 453-2866 to schedule a drop-off. When making an appointment, you select the time and date that you want to drop-off your items (year-round, Monday-Friday between 6:30 am and 6:00 pm).

You’ll get a confirmation email that includes instructions and directions to the drop-off location, Environmental Products and Services of Vermont (EPSVT) in Syracuse. EPSVT specializes in proper disposal of hazardous materials. Pretty easy, right?

There are a boatload of items in a modern household that should NEVER go in the trash or down the drain - or in the backyard (*shudder*). So, OCRRA

set up this free, nifty year-round program specifically for household toxics including automotive products, cleaning supplies, smoke detectors, lighter fluid, oil-based paints, mercury thermometers and more.

Do you know what’s not part of the toxics drop off program, however? Latex paint and fluorescent light bulbs.

Latex paint can be dried up with cat litter and thrown out in your trash (lids off).

Fluorescent bulbs can be brought to partnering hardware stores for recycling. Check out [www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAbulbs](http://www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAbulbs) for a list of locations.

What else is verboten at these toxic drop off appointments? Bringing a single item, such as one can

of old oven cleaning spray. *Nope, we want volume people.* Scour your home for ALL of your household hazardous waste items and consolidate them into one appointment. Even better, consider grouping them in with a family member’s or a neighbor’s materials, for a more efficient trip.

No matter what, never, NEVER put household toxics in your blue bin.

When household toxics end up in the blue bin (or the trash), their containers are likely to break, which endangers you, your neighbors, your waste hauler and the environment. So don’t do it, okey-dokey?

Recycling Rhoda

**FACT:** Plastic flower pots don’t go in the blue bin. Some garden centers will take them, otherwise they should be thrown out.

# Get OCRRA Mulch or Compost for All Your Summer Garden Projects

Theresa Evans, Recycling Specialist

With summer in full swing, knowing where and how to acquire OCRRA's mulch and certified compost is key to growing the best vegetables and creating the most beautiful landscapes in the neighborhood. Join the company of thousands of local residents and landscapers that rely on OCRRA's high-quality products for their gardens and lawns each year. Consider the following options:

## 1) FILL YOUR TRUNK

If you are looking for less than a cubic yard of mulch or compost and have a car, mini-van, SUV or van, you may self-load with the trunkload option. **No site pass is needed.**

- ½" General Compost: **\$10 / trunkload.**
- Double Ground Wood Mulch: **\$5 / trunkload.**

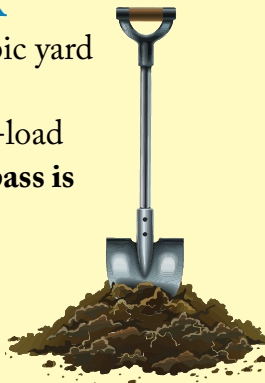


Photo Credit: OCRRA, Camillus, 2019.

Town of Onondaga resident Jeremy Skinner takes advantage of OCRRA's "trunkload option" filling up his Jeep with nutrient-rich, ½" screened compost that will help his garden grow this summer. You can do the same with your car, minivan, SUV or van for only \$10 a load at OCRRA's Amboy or Jamesville Compost Sites. Double ground mulch is also available for \$5 per trunk load.

## 2) BUY IT BY THE YARD

Mulch and compost can be purchased in bulk; OCRRA will load your truck or trailer for you. There is no self-loading and no site pass is needed. A pass is only needed if you are looking to drop off material. Don't have a truck or trailer? Check out a list of local haulers that will deliver mulch and compost to you by the yard at [www.tinyurl.com/haul4u](http://www.tinyurl.com/haul4u).



- ½" General Compost: **\$15 / cubic yard.**
- ¼" Premium Compost: **\$20 / cubic yard.**
- Double Ground Wood Mulch: **\$12 / cubic yard.**

## 3) BUY COMPOST IN BAGS

OCRRA compost is available at more than 30 retail locations (¼" premium compost only). Each store sets its own price point. Check the list to the right for a listing of retailers, which can also be found at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org).

If you are only looking to drop off material at either the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site you will need a 2019 Compost Site Pass. This **\$25 residential pass** allows unlimited, year-round drop off of yard waste and food scraps at both Compost Sites. It also comes with two free bags of ¼" premium compost. The drop off pass is for residential use only, and is not available to commercial customers. To purchase a 2019 Compost Site Pass, visit [www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAcompostpass](http://www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAcompostpass), or stop by one of the Compost Sites when they are open.



Visit OCRRA's award-winning Compost Sites and help "Save the World a Little Each Day," while also creating beautiful landscapes and gardens at home.

## Buy OCRRA Compost By the Bag

These fine retailers set their own pricepoint for OCRRA's high quality, ¼" US Composting Council certified material. Call for details.



### North Area

- B'ville Supply – Baldwinsville
- Ballantyne Gardens – Liverpool
- CountryMax – Cicero
- CountryMax – Lysander
- CountryMax – Oswego
- Deaton's Agway – Pulaski
- Green Acres Lawn & Garden Center – Liverpool
- Pond & Rock Shop – Cicero
- T.J.'s Lawns Plus – Phoenix
- Village Ace Hardware Baldwinsville

### South Area

- Bob's True Value – Syracuse
- Carol Watson Greenhouse LaFayette
- CountryMax – Cortland
- CountryMax – Norwich
- Green Hills Farms – Nedrow
- Neil Casey's Farm Market – Tully
- Valley View Gardens – Cortland
- Watson Farms Landscaping & Garden Center – LaFayette

### East Area

- Aspinall's – Chittenango
- CountryMax – DeWitt
- EverGreen Landscaping and Garden Center – Syracuse
- Green Scapes – Jamesville
- Manlius True Value Hardware – Manlius
- Spruce Ridge Landscaping & Garden Center – Cazenovia
- Syracuse Cooperative Market – Syracuse
- Village Ace Hardware – Fayetteville
- Vollmer Farms – East Syracuse
- Wagner Farms – Rome

### West Area

- Maldonado Gardens – Elbridge
- Oliver's Produce – Marcellus
- Silver Spring Farm Market Onondaga Hill
- Sollecito Landscaping Nursery Syracuse
- Town Square Ace Hardware – Skaneateles

## Need a Truck to Get Compost or Mulch?

Do you want to buy OCRRA Compost or Mulch by the yard, but do not have a truck or trailer to transport it? Visit [www.tinyurl.com/haul4u](http://www.tinyurl.com/haul4u) for a list of local haulers that can deliver right to you!



# Protect Your Identity: Shred Your Confidential Documents with OCRRA

Chanel Quail, Recycling Specialist

Shredding medical documents, bank information, tax documents and other items containing personal account numbers helps to combat identity theft.

If you want to do this, then mark your calendar for Shred-o-Rama, hosted by OCRRA, Assemblyman Magnarelli, Confidata, ProShred and Simple Shred. The event takes place **Saturday, July 13 from 8 am to noon** at the Brown Lot of the NYS Fairgrounds (enter from State Fair Boulevard across from Gates 3 and 4). No registration is required.

Thanks to the shredding companies and volunteers donating their time and talent, this service is provided for free; however, monetary donations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association are appreciated.

To reduce wait time, attendees should:

- 1) **Bring CONFIDENTIAL items ONLY;** the following items will **NOT** be accepted: phonebooks, magazines, newspapers,

junk mail, receipts, hanging file folders, binders, photos, photo albums, trash, electronics and hazardous waste.

- 2) Remove non-paper contaminants before arrival (plastic – bags, binders, folders; spiral notebooks; laminated items; electronic media including computer disks, CDs, etc.). Staples, paperclips and tape do not need to be removed.
- 3) Pack confidential documents loosely in easy to lift, medium-size cardboard boxes (measuring roughly 10" x 12" x 15") to keep attendees and staff safe from lifting injuries. There is a five box limit per vehicle. Items in plastic bags will not be accepted as they slow down the shredding process.
- 4) Unlock doors and trunks so that staff may quickly and easily access documents.
- 5) Stay in their vehicle at all times during the event.



Photo Credit: Klineberg Photography, Syracuse, 2017.

Bob Williams of Confidata empties confidential documents into a Toter bound for on-site shredding at a previous Shred-o-Rama event. Bring your confidential documents on Saturday, July 13 to the NYS Fairgrounds Brown Parking Lot to be shredded and recycled at no cost.

The event is FREE and open to household residents in Onondaga County only; business materials will not be accepted. If your workplace needs shredding services, visit **OCRRA.org** for details.

Many thanks to:

- Assemblyman Magnarelli for his support and his staff's donation of time.

• Confidata, ProShred and Simple Shred who provide a generous donation of staff time and mobile trucks that shred the confidential documents onsite.

Now that shredded paper is no longer acceptable in the recycling bin in Onondaga County – you could help the environment by

reducing the amount of confidential documents you accrue – consider signing up for e-statements with your bank, doctor's offices, etc. Every little bit helps to reduce waste.

Chanel Quail can be reached at [cquail@ocrra.org](mailto:cquail@ocrra.org).



<b>Site Hours</b>	<b>Jamesville Compost Site</b> 4370 Route 91 Jamesville <hr/> <b>April 1 to November 30</b> Thursday – Saturday 7:30 am – 3:30 pm	<b>Amboy Compost Site</b> 6296 Airport Road Camillus <hr/> <b>Year-Round</b> Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 3:30 pm
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**Ley Creek Site Hours**

5158 Ley Creek Drive  
Liverpool

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**Monday-Friday**  
6:30 am to 1:30 pm  
**Saturday**  
8:00 am to 11:30 am

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*OCRRA's waste reduction, reuse and recycling program efforts (including this newsletter) are partially financed by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.*

## Rock Cut Road Transfer Station Closed

The Rock Cut Road Transfer Station is closed for major renovations. All customers – residential, small business and commercial – may bring their materials to the Ley Creek Transfer Station (5158 Ley Creek Drive in Liverpool). Take exit 25 off Route 81, turn left onto 7th North Street and then take a left onto Ley Creek Drive, opposite the Pilot Gas Station).

The Ley Creek Transfer Station is open to residents Monday-Friday from 6:30 am to 1:30 pm and every Saturday from 8:00 am to 11:30 am. For a list of disposal fees, visit: [www.ocrra.org/locations/drop-off-locations/ley-creek/](http://www.ocrra.org/locations/drop-off-locations/ley-creek/)



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Syracuse, 2019.

**FACT:** The Ley Creek Transfer Station is open Monday-Friday, 6:30 am-1:30 pm and Saturdays, 8:00 am-11:30 am.

# Did You Know, OCRRA Programs Help Reduce Greenhouse Gases?

Cristina Alburnio, Agency Engineer

OCRRA's solid waste management system was structured to benefit our community and the environment.

One way we are working to benefit our environment is by minimizing the greenhouse gases our community's solid wastes generate.

Greenhouse gases trap heat in our atmosphere and contribute to climate change. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. They occur naturally, but are also created by burning fossil fuels; the decay of solid waste; agricultural and industrial activities; and biological and chemical reactions.

When it comes to solid waste, OCRRA works hard to reduce our community's greenhouse gas generation. OCRRA offers programs such as composting, recycling and solid waste combusting (waste-to-energy) to reduce the impact greenhouse gases have on the environment. These three programs are far more efficient at reducing greenhouse gas generation as compared to the alternative of landfilling.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency created the Waste Reduction Model (WARM) to estimate greenhouse gas emission reductions for systems like OCRRA's that utilize recycling, composting and combustion instead of solid waste landfilling.

Each year OCRRA uses WARM to determine the amount of greenhouse gases avoided through recycling and reports this to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. In addition, OCRRA can estimate how much greenhouse gas production is avoided through composting and waste-to-energy based on industry standards.

Each type of greenhouse gas has a different global warming potential, a standard unit called a carbon dioxide equivalent is used, so that comparisons can be made.

The effect OCRRA's



Photo Credit: iStock, 2019.

OCRRA's combined recycling, composting and waste-to-energy efforts have the greenhouse gas emissions equivalent of reducing one million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents each year. This is roughly the same as removing the greenhouse gas emissions created by driving 212,314 passenger cars on the road for an entire year!

system has on greenhouse gas emissions equates to the reduction of approximately one million metric tons of carbon dioxide

equivalents each year. This is roughly the same as the greenhouse gas emissions created by driving 212,314 passenger cars on the road for a year or consuming 112,523,900 gallons of gasoline.

This estimate is on the low end of how much greenhouse gas is reduced by OCRRA's comprehensive system. By utilizing local management of solid waste in our county, we also minimize the distance vehicles travel to dispose and manage waste.

Some communities in New York State travel over 600 miles to dispose their trash. Through responsible local management of our solid waste, OCRRA is making our community a more sustainable and healthier place to live. Thank you for participating in the recycling and composting programs and for doing your part to help save the world a little each day!

Cristina Alburnio can be reached at [calburnio@ocrra.org](mailto:calburnio@ocrra.org).



## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Each year, OCRRA programs eliminate one million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. This equates to eliminating the same amount of emissions generated by driving 212,314 passenger vehicles in one year!



## Electronics Recycling

Need to get rid of an old TV or other electronic device? **The Salvation Army on Erie Blvd. in Syracuse** will accept working and non-working TVs and monitors of any size. TVs and monitors cannot be physically broken. Only one TV per visit. They will also accept other functional electronics\*. **Call (315) 445-0520 before dropping items off.**

Best Buy locations and Battery World will accept TVs and monitors for a charge, pend-

ing size. They will accept other electronics for free. **Call ahead for details:**

- **Best Buy, Destiny USA, (315) 426-1588;**
- **Best Buy, DeWitt, (315) 449-1784;**
- **Battery World, East Molloy Road, Syracuse, (315) 437-1404.**

Staples locations will accept electronics, excluding TVs. **Call ahead for details:**

- **Staples, Camillus, (315) 488-4071;**



- **Staples, Clay, (315) 715-0112;**
- **Staples, East Syracuse, (315) 463-8040.**

*\*Electronics include computers, monitors, keyboards, mice or similar pointing devices, fax machines, scanners, printers, and small electronic equipment (tablets, VCRs, DVRs, portable digital music players, DVD players, digital converter boxes, cable or satellite receivers, video game consoles, etc.).*

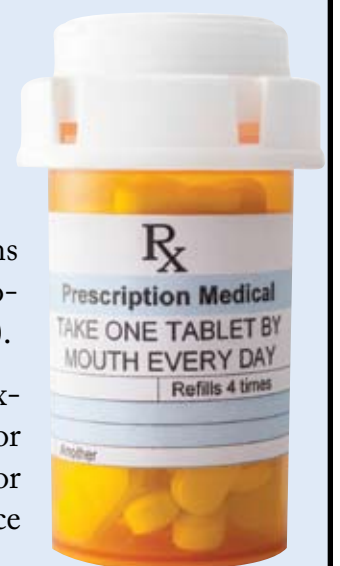
## R<sub>x</sub> Bottles & Medication

*Prescription bottles, the cylindrical kind that are often orange, are not recyclable. They should go in the trash.*

### Looking to get rid of old medication?

Do NOT dispose of it down the drain or toilet as waste water treatment plants cannot filter out certain items (hormone medications, chemotherapy drugs, antibiotics, etc.).

Disguise medication by mixing it with coffee grounds or food scraps, to deter people or pets from ingesting it, and place it in the trash.





## From the Executive Director's Desk...

# Sustainable Shopping is in the Bag: Carry In/Carry Out

DERETH GLANCE, Executive Director, OCRRA

The ubiquitous plastic bag has become invasive litter frequently found flapping in the wind entwined in tree limbs, clogging storm drains and tumbling toward waterways destined to join its cousins in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

As of March 1, 2020, the practice of giving away free, flimsy plastic bags will be history in New York State due to important legislation passed as part of the budget process. Retailers and grocers are ready to implement this process. Wegmans recently announced that it will end the free give away of plastic grocery bags at checkout at the end of this year, joining the likes of Save-A-Lot and Aldi.

OCRRA has long supported the end of free, flimsy plastic bags at the checkout line. While we all have to remember our reusable bags before our next big grocery shopping trip, the impacts of this policy are well worth it.

Ending the free giveaway of plastic bags for every purchase we make is a huge win for the environment. It reduces the incidence of unsightly litter; municipal infrastructure clogs - such as the sorting of recyclables or storm water treatment; and marine debris, which starves or chokes wildlife from plastic ingestion or entanglement.

Once plastic pollution is released in the environment, it never really goes away. Plastic "photodegrades," which means that the sun breaks down plastic into smaller fragments. These smaller pieces are just as dangerous to fish and wildlife as the larger pieces because they often get mistaken for food. Studies have shown that young fish will feed on small plastic pieces, which fill their bellies without much effort, but provide no nutrition. Whales washing ashore with more than 50 pounds of plastic in their bellies, sea turtles injured

by plastic straws and the ever-growing gyre of plastic trash floating like a new iceberg in the ocean requires us to rethink our values. Is our disposable culture worth trashing our streets and oceans?

Here's how you can make an impact: Prepare for the new plastic bag law; do it early to create good habits before the March 2020 implementation. Invest in reusable bags and keep them handy. Next time you are out shopping - and not just grocery shopping, but at retail stores, wholesale clubs, pharmacies, etc. - remember your reusable shopping bags. Encourage your friends, family and co-workers to do the same. Together we can make a difference for our environment and save the world a little each day.

Dereth Glance can be reached at [dglance@ocrra.org](mailto:dglance@ocrra.org).



Photo Credit: iStock, 2019.

Recent NYS Legislation will make single-use, retail plastic bags a thing of the past come 2020. Get ready for this new law. Invest in reusable bags, keep them handy and use them at the grocery store or wherever you shop. Encourage others to do the same.

## Plastic Bag Factoids

Film plastics should NEVER go in the recycling bin. However, clean, dry, stretchy film plastics can be recycled at supermarkets, big box stores and chain pharmacies.

### ACCEPTABLE

- Grocery bags
- Retail bags (with draw strings removed, if applicable)
- Dry cleaning bags
- Bread bags
- Produce bags (remove labels)
- Newspaper bags
- Zip top bags (i.e., Ziploc bags)
- Air pillows from shipping packages (air removed)
- Bubblewrap from shipping packages (air removed)
- Case wrap (i.e., found around cases of water)
- Overwrap (i.e., found around paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, etc.)

### UNACCEPTABLE

- Plastic bags with food residue
- Plastic bags with strings
- Plastic soil or mulch bags
- Degradable/compostable bags or film packaging
- Pre-washed salad mix bags
- Frozen food bags
- Candy bar wrappers
- Chip bags
- Six-pack rings

*Are there ANY plastic bags that will still be given out after the new law goes into effect?*

Yes, plastic bags for the following items will still be given out or sold:

- Trash bags;
- Uncooked meat, fish, or poultry;
- Bulk foods;
- Sliced or prepared to order food;
- Newspaper bags for home delivery;
- Plastic carryout or delivery bags for meals;
- Prescription bags;
- Food storage bags.

*What should you carry your groceries in instead?*

Stores must allow you to bring any type of bag you want for the purposes of carrying purchased goods. Reusable bags specifically designed and manufactured for multiple uses are ideal.

Source: Part H, Title 28, S.1508-C/A.2008-C NYS Budget Bill

**FACT:** Stretchy film plastics (e.g., overwrap on cases of water bottles or paper towels) can be recycled at big box stores.



**QUESTION OF THE QUARTER**

Follow OCRRA on Facebook and ask us all your recycling and disposal questions!

**Q:** OCRRA you changed the recycling rules! I'm really confused about recycling plastics. So, now I can't put strawberry cartons, plastic bags or takeout containers in the blue bin?!

**A:** That's right, plastic clamshells, plastic bags and plastic take out containers are trash. They have always been trash.

Very little has actually changed about what can and cannot be recycled, we are just clarifying the rules by giving an easier and more accurate way to describe the plastics: **ignore the numbers, focus on the shape of the item.**

If it fits the description below, it can go in the recycling bin. If it does not, it should go in the trash (unless it is a clean, dry, stretchy plastic bag; they can be recycled at area grocery, pharmacy and retail stores).

- **BOTTLE\*** - something that has a neck and a smaller opening than base (has threads at the neck for a screw on cap),
- **JAR\*** - similar to the bottle description, e.g., peanut butter jar (rinse out; it does not have to be spotless)
- **JUG\*** - something with a handle - like a milk jug or laundry detergent bottle, or
- **WIDE-MOUTH, STACKABLE DAIRY TUBS** - any tub that previously contained a dairy product like butter, yogurt, cream cheese, etc. It must be able to nest inside itself though. If you can't stack them inside themselves, they are not recyclable. Lids are not recyclable.

*\*Note: Plastic caps from bottles, jars and jugs can be recycled, but only if you reattach them. Metal caps go in the trash.*

Also recyclable here are **cartons** - think milk or juice cartons - **cardboard, newspaper, magazines, catalogs, softcover books, paperboard boxes** - like cereal, pasta, tissue - **office paper, mail and non-frozen food boxes.**

If you find yourself having to ask yourself too many questions when deciding if something goes in the bin vs. not, it should go in the trash to avoid contaminating the other recyclables. When in doubt, if you can't check it out (on our website, on Facebook, or by calling us at 315-453-2866), throw it out.

Poor recycling markets are forcing entities like OCRRA to focus on reducing contamination (things that end up in the bin that shouldn't be there because there aren't companies that want to buy them - or things that slow down the sorting process). Contamination affects where we can sell our recyclables and how much it costs to ship them. The cleaner our blue bin materials are, the higher price they fetch on the market and the less it costs OCRRA to manage the materials.

A little known fact is that OCRRA is not a county tax supported organization. Our operations fund our programs. In 2017 we earned \$125,000 on our community's recycling. In 2018 we spent close to 2 million dollars to make it happen. The cleaner our materials are, the more sustainable our recycling program is in the long-run. The latest recycling instructions can be downloaded in English and Spanish here: [www.ocrra.org/services/recycle/](http://www.ocrra.org/services/recycle/)



**VIDEO: What to Recycle**



Photo Credit: Syracuse.com, 2019.

**Confused about recycling?** It turns out many of us are not sure what to do with plastic clamshell containers, plastic cups, plastic bags, empty drink cartons, egg cartons, old clothes and hangers. If you want a refresher on what, how and where to recycle in Onondaga County, check out this Syracuse.com video. It'll help you sort through all the "garbage..."

[www.tinyurl.com/RecyclingWithOCRRA](http://www.tinyurl.com/RecyclingWithOCRRA)

Please share the video with your friends and family.

Save the world a little each day.

**Pizza Boxes: Blue Bin or Not?**



**YES**

**Delivery and carry-out pizza boxes** are cardboard or paperboard and are 100% recyclable – as long as you remove any loose food or trash.



**NO**

**Frozen pizza boxes** – and any frozen food box – are trash as they have coatings that protect the food, but make them undesirable for recycling.

**Mark Your Calendar**

ALKALINE BATTERY COLLECTION

**ENTIRE MONTH OF JULY**

Place yellow battery bag on top of your trash. See page 3 for details.

ALL OCRRA SITES CLOSED

**JULY 4 & SEPTEMBER 2**

*Happy Holidays!*

SHRED-O-RAMA **SATURDAY, JULY 13**

**NYS FAIRGROUNDS Brown Parking Lot**  
8:00 am – 12:00 noon  
Enter opposite gates 3 & 4.

MERCURY THERM DROP OFF

**SAT, AUGUST 3**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTS & SERVICES**

8:00 am – 11:00am

HOUSEHOLD TOXICS DROP-OFF

**Year-Round by Appointment**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTS & SERVICES**

**M – F, 6:30 am – 6:00 pm**

Register at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org).

**FACT:** Egg cartons are not recyclable, even paper ones. Their fibers are too short to recycle again. Trash or compost them at home.