

Clean Water for the Holidays

Resources and Simple Steps to Protect Water Quality and Our Environment This Holiday Season

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RECYCLE THOSE SHOPPING BAGS AND PLASTIC FILMS FROM GIFTS

Recycling those plastic bags and films keeps them out of the landfill and out of our waterways while also providing material for a new generation of products. Recycling rates for plastic bags and film are very low, only about 12% according to the EPA. However, the demand for plastic is very high, and recycling is the best way to help meet that demand. Remember plastic bags and film cannot be recycled in curbside programs. They must be taken to a designated plastic bag and film recycling location. Visit [ABagsLife.com](http://www.abagslife.com) for the nearest location to you. <http://www.abagslife.com/find-a-recycle-center/>

Recycle These Plastic Items:

Shopping bags
Vegetable bags
Dry cleaning bags
Shipping bags
Newspaper bags
Plastic film from paper towels and toilet paper.



FATS, OILS, AND GREASE ARE NOT WELCOME AT THE HOLIDAY PARTY!

When wastewater enters your drain it flows through a pipe system that's usually only about 4 inches in diameter. Once the water begins to cool the grease begins to harden and stick to pipe walls closing off the flow of water. Food scraps chopped up by your garbage disposal just add to this problem. Clogged up sanitary pipes are one of the reasons for sewer overflows that are a major concern for our local waters.

Don't Use the Garbage Disposal!

Wipe pans & utensils with a paper towel prior to washing.

Never pour oil, drippings, batters, sauces, or dressings down the drain. Absorb these substances with a paper towel and toss into the trash.

Pour used cooking grease into an empty, heat safe container like a soup can; let it cool and harden, then toss it out with the garbage.

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Smartphone App for Finding Recycling and Disposal Drop Off Locations

The holidays for some means new consumer electronics and lots of batteries! Wondering where to take those used batteries, old electronics, compact fluorescent bulbs, paint, automotive oil, etc.? Find locations for recycling or disposing of household waste that should not go into our landfills or waterways with this free app for Android or IOS. iRecycle features access to more than 800,000 recycling and disposal resources for more than 240 materials.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.earth911.android>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/irecycle/id312708176?mt=8>

Fall Leaves Can Impact Water Quality

In Hampton Roads, many of us are still raking leaves in December. How we manage those leaves can affect water quality. When leaves enter storm drains, they clog the pipes and cause street flooding. And if they aren't removed, the leaves will start to decay, which sends excess nutrients into our waterways. So when you are raking up those final leaves of Fall, remember not to rake or blow them into storm drains or gutters.



- **Never rake or blow leaves into ditches, storm drains, or gutters***
- **Check with your locality to find out how leaves will be collected (bagging, curbside leaf vacuuming, etc.).**
- **Mow over your leaves to create finely chopped mulch and then leave them in place. You'll love how easy it is and your lawn will love the mulch!**
- **Put your fallen leaves into your compost bin. Come spring, your garden will be thankful for the fertile soil.**

* Although Newport News conducts curbside leaf collection, the instructions clearly state that leaves should NOT be placed in the gutter or drainage ditches