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It doesn't look like it's going to be a White Christmas, Follow the 3 R's and help make it a Green Christmas

Last December, Bedford had a 22 percent increase in trash over the total in November and the total amount of trash that month, 307 tons, was almost 50 tons more than the monthly average for FY15.

To avoid a repeat of the December surge, the Bedford DPW is asking residents to fill their recycling bins with the variety of materials they generate this holiday season. To that end, the DPW is offering some tips to help residents and businesses divert paper, cardboard and other materials from the trash barrel to a recycling bin.

The first step is to follow the first "R" – Reduce". When shopping for gifts, look for items with minimal packaging, buy recycled items, hand-made gifts and reuse items instead of buying new.

The second "R" – Reuse" can be treacherous during the holidays unless you're confident the recipient of your present doesn't know you are re-gifting.

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Then there is the third “R” – Recycle”. The holidays offer a variety of opportunities to fill your recycling bin and lighten the load in your trash barrel.

First there are paper products. The mailbox is full of catalogs, store circulars, holiday cards, and solicitations for end-of-year donations. And if you shop online, you’ll have plenty of cardboard boxes to put out. Catalogs are like magazines and belong in the recycling bin. The envelopes the greeting cards and other mail items come in are all recyclable as are most of the contents of the envelope. The only exceptions are those items with foil, glitter or a metallic looking ink.

Other items that can be recycled include gift boxes that can’t be reused, gift bags, tissue wrap and wrapping paper. Another tip is take one of those tall paper leaf bags you didn’t use in the fall and use it to collect the wrapping paper your family members rip apart to get to their presents!

Packing pillows that arrive inside the shipping box can be deflated and recycled with plastic shopping bags at your grocery store or department store. Styrofoam can be recycled on December 28 in front of the Bedford Police.

Then there are all the containers and packaging (boxes, glass, metal and plastic) from the kitchen that were emptied to make the holiday feast and treats. These too go in the recycling bin.

Keep the recycling bin clear of the following: ribbons, bows, tinsel, plastic packaging, photographs, any item with foil or food waste.