

City of Portland

Zero Waste Toolkit for Residents

REDUCE

The best thing you can do for the planet?
Buy less and use what you have.

- Refuse what you don't need! Especially single-use disposables, like plastic cups or utensils.
- Borrow or rent items you only need in the short term. Learn about Portland's [Tool Lending Library](#).
- Try DIY household and hygiene items to reduce waste packaging.
- Grocery shop smart: Only buy what you know you can eat before it goes bad. Buy from local producers to support Mainers & reduce wasteful packaging.
- Give non-material gifts like tickets to a concert or a trip to the spa.
- Unsubscribe from unwanted catalogs and junk mail & go paperless with bills when you can.

RECYCLE RIGHT

- Ecomaine Recyclopedia – or only putting truly recyclable items in the bin – is the best way to ensure that recycling is effective, efficient, and economical.
- Buy products made with recycled content. This decreases products' carbon footprint & helps to increase the demand for recycled materials.
- If you must use single-use disposable products, choose ones that are recyclable.
- Dispose of hazardous and electronic waste responsibly: [Riverside Recycling](#) accepts hazardous household waste (like lead paint and household products with labels that say flammable, corrosive, explosive, or poisonous) throughout most of the year, and for recycling electronics, propane tanks, tires, and more.

REUSE & REPAIR

Reusing instead of buying new is great for the environment and your wallet.

- Find businesses that can help with bike and auto repair, tailors, shoe repair, thrift, and second-hand stores, and electronic and appliance repair shops.
- Choose reusable and refillable over disposable whenever possible.
 - Try bringing a reusable coffee mug with you, carrying a reusable utensil set, or bringing food to-go in tupperware.
 - [GoGo Refill](#) (South Portland) is a bring-your-own-container shop that sells refillable personal care products and refillable home cleaning products.
- Seek out one of the many donation establishments in Portland, such as Maine Needs, Preble Street, Salvation Army, or Goodwill.
 - [Maine Needs](#) is driven to help individuals and families in Maine meet their basic, material needs.
 - [Preble Street](#) programs serve to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty and to advocate for solutions to these problems.
- Join your local Buy Nothing Facebook page. Each community has a group where neighbors can get and give goods and services for free.

COMPOST

Try to avoid tossing food scraps in the trash bin – save valuable space in your trash bag and valuable energy in leftover food!

- City of Portland has a [community compost program](#) that maintains eight FREE locations for residents to drop off food scraps.
- Garbage to Garden is a curbside collection service in Portland - simply throw all of your food scraps and other compostables in their green bucket and they will collect it each week, replacing it with a clean bucket.