



The ULS Report™

Helping people Use Less Stuff™ by conserving resources and reducing waste.

Because one day doesn't seem to be enough...

November 19-25, 2009 is Use Less Stuff Week!

In 1995, we developed a statistic that is frequently quoted to describe how much extra waste is generated between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day: *5 million tons*. We created ULS Day (the third Thursday of November) to educate people and help them reduce that waste.

We're a bit chagrined to report that today, rather than declining, that number has grown by 20%, to *6 million tons*. Obviously, ULS Day hasn't been a big enough event to get people into the conservation spirit. So, starting this year, we're proclaiming the entire week before Thanksgiving (November 19-25, 2009) to be Use Less Stuff Week. (The state of Oklahoma beat us to it, as they've proclaimed an **Official ULS Week** for years!)

At the request of many ULSers, we've even (OK, finally) updated some of your favorite holiday waste statistics:

Did you know...

- Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, Americans generate 25% more waste per week than during the rest of the year. This creates an additional 1.2 million tons per week, or an extra 6 million tons, for the holiday season.
- According to the USDA, Americans throw away 25% of food purchased -- 52 billion pounds each year, or 170 pounds per person! When you add in food waste from restaurants, retailers and other commercial purveyors, the University of Arizona estimates that the real amount wasted is closer to 50%.
- If every American family reduced holiday gasoline consumption by just one gallon a week, the result would be an annual reduction in greenhouse gas production of 13 billion pounds (6.5 million tons) of carbon dioxide.
- If American households reduced their holiday ribbon usage by just 2 feet, the result would be a savings of 50,000 miles, enough ribbon to circle the Earth twice.

What You Can Do

Here are five very simple things to do that will help you reduce holiday-related waste:

1. Buy rechargeable batteries for those new toys and give them as stocking stuffers, especially to teenagers. On average, every year your family will keep hundreds of batteries out of landfills and hundreds of dollars in your pockets by switching to rechargeables.



Rechargeables have come a long way in the last few years. For example, the latest versions from price leader Rayovac outperform their non-rechargeable cousins by up to three times in high-drain items like digital cameras, and no longer suffer the "memory loss" that used to prevent them from fully recharging. Also, their rechargeable AA or AAA batteries work in all chargers, and their new USB charger plugs into your PC or laptop for constant power on-the-go.

When they finally wear out, rechargeable batteries can even be recycled. Learn more at www.rayovac.com.

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2. Are students coming home for the holidays with loads of laundry? Switch to a cold water detergent like Tide Cold Water. It does a better job on stains in cold water than standard detergents do in warm water. And if you have a High Efficiency washer, the HE version will reduce your energy costs by 50% a load! (Don't forget to recycle the bottles when they're empty.)



3. Check the closet before buying more giftwrap, bows or ribbons. You probably already have some on-hand. (Kids won't remember or care that they've seen it before.) Also, use old maps, magazine pages, gift bags and even plastic bags to wrap your gifts.

When it's time to apply the tape, you'll be happy to learn that through a partnership with Terracycle called The Tape Brigade, Scotch Tape wants you and your favorite organization to collect and send them used dispensers and cores for recycling. Scotch Tape will then donate two cents per dispenser to a charity of your choice. You can get a pre-paid postage label and learn more at www.terracycle.net.



4. Along with detergent bottles and tape dispensers, many plastic wrappers -- like bread and newspaper bags, bathroom tissue and paper towel wrappers -- are easy to recycle. (So are the dry cleaning bags you'll soon be removing from your holiday finery.) Find out how at www.plasticbagrecycling.org.
5. Plan your meals, your gifts, and your trips. You'll get the most value for your time and money, since you shop more effectively and efficiently.

- Think of the leftovers from big meals as the ingredients for the next couple of meals. Serving turkey on Thursday? Think of the leftovers as Friday's sandwiches, Saturday's soup and Sunday's chili. Buy all necessary ingredients at the same time, so you've got everything on hand when it's time to cook. Also, keep leftovers in the front of the fridge so you can see them and thus remember to use them. *Out of sight, out of mind.*

- Shop for gifts and food from a list. You'll buy what you need and what others want and will use, thus reducing waste. You'll also reduce unnecessary, and oftentimes wasteful, impulse shopping.
- Plan trips by geography and travel accordingly. You'll save time and gasoline by reducing driving. Doing so also saves money and reduces greenhouse gas generation.

Of course, we have plenty of additional tips, if you're interested. Simply review the **holiday issues** of our past newsletters. Have a lean and green holiday season! ❧❧❧

Good News on the Sustainable Packaging Front

We are proud to introduce the **CalcuLess™** Environmental Impact Analyzer, which can help packaging designers, marketers, retailers, and even consumers to understand how different packages can generate differing levels of energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and solid waste generation. It's free for all to use, and is available on our web site or at www.calculless.net.

Simply enter the type of product (let's say peanut butter), and its weight or volume and package type (12 oz. in a glass jar or 18 oz. in a plastic container, for example). **CalcuLess** will quickly do the rest.

Attention teachers and students: Don't have any data? Use ours, from the latest **Packaging Efficiency Study**.

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