



Recycling Greeting Cards and Holiday Wrapping Paper

It can often be difficult to find a location to recycle your Greeting Cards and Holiday Wrapping Paper because the materials are typically non-recyclable. Some things to keep in mind when choosing wrapping paper:

- Cards and wrapping paper is often dyed and laminated.
- They can also contain non-paper additives, such as gold and silver coloring, glitter and plastics.
- The cardstock and paper can be very thin and contain few good quality fibers for recycling.
- Cards, envelopes, and wrapping paper usually have tape on from the gift wrapping.

In general, most **Wrapping Paper** is not recyclable. Many of the inks used to adorn wrapping paper are oil-based, and aren't simply printed on the surface of the paper, but are actually in the pulp of the paper. The de-inking process used to recycle most other types of paper is not effective at removing ink from paper like this. Also, many types of wrapping paper are thin and do not contain good quality fibers for recycling. Additionally, wrapping paper is often laminated and/or contains glitter, tape or other additives that cannot be recycled. Alternatives to traditional gift wrap abound and can create some very memorable, fun, and creative presents. Here are some great ideas:

- **Paper grocery sacks.** While some of these have printed surfaces, they usually offer plenty of space for kids to draw a picture or to scribble greetings for the receiver of the gift.
- **Reusable shopping bags.** Many gifts can be wrapped in reusable cloth bags, adding a special reusable gift that can be handy all year long!
- **The newspaper.** The comics are always a favorite, so get creative and reuse that old paper!
- **Go to the thrift store** and find something interesting, like old maps or unique fabric.
- **Buy an alternative wrap**, such as the fabric ones!

Remember that many boxes you accumulate through the year are also great for gift giving. While your waste management facility *might* accept wrapping paper, call ahead to verify first, and using alternatives is the eco-friendly way to go. Children love arts and crafts projects and will be excited to present their hard work as a gift — a great lesson when teaching them to reuse and recycle.



Greeting Cards

Despite the abundance of e-card websites, email, and social media, **Greeting Cards** abound, especially during the holiday season. These cards are often made from cardstock and use various dyes, textiles, and even electronics for music or mini-lights.

Greeting Cards with musical components, cards with music/electronic parts in them would be considered "contaminated" if those components were left in the card. The paper recycling process doesn't allow for materials that comprise the musical/electrical components such as small metal and/or plastic pieces. If those components are removed so that only the paper cardstock remains, the card can be recycled in mixed-paper. This shouldn't be confused with curbside newspaper recycling though; mixed paper can only be recycled at designated drop-off locations around the region including the transfer stations.

Another important thing to keep in mind when recycling greeting cards is the type of printing and decoration adorning the card. Like wrapping paper, if the greeting cards have any shiny, metallic components to them they can't be recycled without those parts being removed. This includes the inks, even for photo Greeting Cards. Many mixed-paper recyclers can handle photographic paper/printed paper, but this type of card or paper should only be recycled with mixed-paper.

Some things to consider for Greeting Card recycling:

- Curbside recycling does not accept mixed paper in our area. For mixed paper recycling in the Reno, Sparks, Las Vegas and Carson City areas, Greeting Cards can be added to mixed paper and dropped off at the local Transfer Station as long as the metallic/electronic components are removed first.
- Most cards come with great graphics or fun textiles that can be used for art projects, collages, ornaments, or folded in half and sent on as a smaller greeting card. Consider reusing old Greeting Cards to make something new and fun!
- Consider sending out e-cards instead of physical Greeting Cards.
- If buying greeting cards is still on your to-do list, go for recycled paper with soy-based ink, which while not completely biodegradable, offers a greener alternative to more traditional oil-based inks.