

Media Release



For Immediate Release

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RCBC Says Public Can Help Take Pressure Off The System During Recycling Industry Downturn

November 25, 2008 – Vancouver, B.C. – Over the past month the market prices for commodities such as steel, tin, plastics and fibre have dropped sharply, resulting in big reductions in the value of the items we put in our blue boxes every week. Recycling is a business and, like all businesses right now, it's being affected by global market forces in this economic downturn.

There is still a market for most of what you recycle in your blue box, so please continue to recycle. However, the Recycling Council of B.C. would like you equip you with a few facts, as we head into the holiday season, so that you can help alleviate the demand for space to stockpile materials that currently have little or no value, and help reduce the seasonal strain that occurs every year at this time as the waste from the holidays hits the system.

- It may sound simple, but the best way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place.
- Take your reusable bags with you when you shop.
- Please be a mindful shopper, and as you shop, be aware of the materials that you are purchasing in the packaging for items you buy.
- Buy products that contain recycled materials or are packaged in recycled content materials
- Avoid buying anything packaged in low grade plastics – numbers 3 through 7. Look for the number in the recycling symbol on bottom of container. These plastics have virtually no value right now.

The annual waste generated in Canada from gift-wrapping and shopping bags equals about 545,000 tonnes. If every Canadian family reduced its weekly waste during the holidays by just one kilogram, we could eliminate 34,000 tonnes of garbage.

If everyone in Canada wrapped just three gifts in reused paper or gift bags, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 hockey rinks. So if you really want to put your waste on ice, here are a few tips for the holiday season:

- Avoid trendy items, buy quality items that will not end up in the garbage in the next few months. Make your own gifts or give experiences instead.
- Take a pledge with your friends and family to enjoy a low-waste holiday season this year. Explain to them why it's important and how they too can help reduce the strain on our recycling system.
- Avoid wrapping paper – use the colour comics, reusable gift bags or make your own gift wrap from brown paper bags coloured with felt pens or crayons. If you must buy wrapping paper, please avoid metallics, glitter and foil embellishments and save your paper for reuse next year.
- Don't buy gifts that are over-packaged
- If you plan to purchase a new computer this year, please consider donating your still-operable computer to a charity that will refurbish it for use in schools or libraries, such as [Computers For Schools](#) or [Free Geek](#).

If you are ever unsure about what you can recycle, call the RCBC hotline (604-RECYCLE and 1-800-667-4321). Our phone lines are open 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.