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2008 Solid Waste guide helps handle the holiday trash

Just in time to help you dispose of all the holiday trimmings, disintegrating Christmas trees and New Year's tinsel comes Sarasota County's 2008 How-to Guide for Residential Solid Waste. This handy, 16-page booklet arrives this week via regular mail to nearly 150,000 county customers who have no more excuses about how tall that tree can be at the curb or if leftover gift wrap goes in the garbage or recycling bin (answer: it goes in the garbage).

According to Solid waste Manager Lois Rose, the guide is one of the most popular items the county produces, and they can barely keep them in stock. "This is one of the most important services we provide to customers within Sarasota County who are served by Waste Management," says Rose. "It contains almost everything you need to know about how to dispose of most common types of garbage, including televisions, mattresses and old tires."

New this year to the guide is an expanded section on household hazardous waste. "If a product in your home has the words 'danger,' 'warning,' 'caution' or 'poison' on the label, it's toxic and doesn't belong in the garbage, your sink, the ground or in a storm drain," says Rose. "Bring these items to any one of the county's three chemical collection centers and let us properly dispose of them for you."

Other areas covered in the guide feature what is and is not recyclable (hint: used pizza boxes really do go in the garbage), how to handle storm debris and the six locations where residents can pick up free compost and mulch.

The guide has detailed instructions for how to handle disposal of used or expired medications and needles and lancets. It also includes all the items that are not eligible for pick-up, but can still be taken to the landfill for a nominal fee.

Days and hours of operations for the county landfill and all three of the county's chemical collection sites are also included, along with tips on organizing neighborhood collection programs for those living at least eight miles from the nearest collection center.

If you didn't receive a guide in the mail and would like a copy of the 2008 How-to Guide for Residential Solid Waste, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask for Solid Waste customer service.