

# GREENWorks

## Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

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### How to Properly Dispose of Disposable Masks

Let's discuss mask etiquette. Don't worry, this is not an article discussing whether or not you should wear a mask; we will leave that up to others. Instead, this article is about proper handling of your disposable mask when you are done with it.

One-Time Use Masks are NOT to be placed in the recycle bin, on the ground or flushed down the toilet. Masks should be securely thrown in the trash can. Here's why:

**1. Disposable Masks are not Recyclable.** Although some face masks may seem like they are made of paper, they are commonly made of synthetic fabrics like polypropylene and polyester. Therefore, tossing masks in your paper recycling can be a source of contamination that solid waste facilities and recycling companies will ultimately need to manage, costing time and money.

**2. Masks on the Ground = Litter.** If you drop your mask, pick it up. If there is no trash can where you are, hold onto your mask until you get home and throw it away. When you leave your used mask on the ground, not only are you littering, but you also increase the chance that someone or something will come into contact with your germs. Under normal circumstances this is just plain disgusting, but with COVID-19, it is particularly risky.

**3. Masks are not Flushable.** The material in these masks is not dispersible, which means that no matter how many times a mask is swirled down the toilet, through the pipes and into either your septic system or sent to a wastewater treatment plant, it will not break down like toilet paper. Flushing masks can cause clogged toilets, drains and malfunctions at wastewater treatment plants.

Please dispose of your masks properly in the trash can with the rest of your solid waste. And when the bag is full, make sure you tie it tightly so the waste stays contained.

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