

Questions and Answers about the Safe Disposal of

Batteries



Why should we be concerned about battery disposal?

Batteries may contain toxic metals such as mercury and cadmium. If batteries which contain these metals end up in incinerators, the metals are released in to the air and from there can contaminate lakes and drinking water. If the batteries end up in landfills, the heavy metals can leach out in to groundwater. Long term exposure to cadmium can cause liver and lung disease. Mercury can cause damage to the human brain, spinal system, kidneys and liver and has been linked to developmental and learning disabilities. Since 1994, most types of alkaline batteries no longer contain mercury, and can be disposed of in the trash.



What's the difference between batteries?

Type of Battery	Common Uses	Recycling/Disposal
Button	Hearing aides, watches, cameras, calculators, paging devices	Return to point of purchase (save receipt), recycle, save for town hazardous waste collection days; your transfer station may take them.
Alkaline	9-volt, D, C, AA, AAA	Dispose of in the trash; this is not hazardous waste
Rechargeable	Appliances, power tools, camcorders, radios, cellular phones	Recharge for multiple uses, then recycle in special recycling boxes available at town facilities or participating stores or save for town hazardous waste collections.
Lithium	AA, C, 9-volt, found in computers and cameras.	Save for town hazardous waste collection days. For rechargeable lithium batteries, see above.
Lead-Acid	Auto/Motorcycle	Return for recycling. Most parts stores and service stations will accept car batteries, especially if you're buying a new one from them

What can you do?

Buy products that don't require batteries, such as kinetic watches and solar powered calculators.

Find out when your town has a collection for household hazardous waste or encourage your town officials to schedule one.

The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC) can help you recycle your rechargeable batteries, commonly found in cordless power tools, cellular and cordless phones, laptop computers, camcorders, digital cameras, and remote control toys. RBRC recycles the following battery chemistries: Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd), Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion (Li-ion) and Small Sealed Lead* (Pb). Call (800) 8-BATTERY or go to www.rbrc.org for collection locations. Most Radio Shacks serve as a collection point. YOUR town may already have a box for battery—ask at your town office or transfer station.

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