

BATTERY RECYCLING INFORMATION

Proper handling of used batteries

Batteries used in many household and office products, as well as motor vehicle batteries, contain a variety of heavy metals and other materials that can be harmful to human health and the environment if not handled properly. Many of these materials can be recovered and reused by specialized recyclers.

Batteries used in homes, businesses and schools

Dry cell batteries are batteries used in many products – including portable electronics, power tools, watches, calculators, hand-held vacuum cleaners, lawn care equipment, flashlights, toys and hearing aids. They come in a variety of sizes and shapes and include both rechargeable and non-rechargeable battery types. They include alkaline, alkaline rechargeable, lithium, lithium ion, metal hydride, mercuric oxide, nickel-cadmium, silver oxide and zinc-air batteries. They include AAA, AA, C, D, 9V, button, coin and other sizes, and may also be incorporated in products (such as cell phones and laptops).

Environmental and safety impacts of dry cell batteries

The materials in many types of dry cell batteries – including mercury, lithium, silver cadmium, lead and acids – have the potential to be hazardous wastes. If batteries are burned or landfilled, the heavy metals in them can be released into the environment.

Many newer batteries, particularly rechargeable lithium ion batteries used in many electronics, also present a significant risk of fire if they are mishandled or damaged. For that reason, it is important to handle used batteries properly in homes, businesses, schools, battery collection sites and recycling facilities.

Safe management of used batteries from households

Wisconsin has no legal requirements for disposing of household dry-cell batteries. Household waste is not regulated as hazardous waste. Homeowners should check with their local recycling program to see if there are additional restrictions. The publication below includes a guide to managing different types of batteries.

- [Household Battery Recycling](#)

If storing batteries for recycling, you can reduce fire risk by taping ends of batteries with clear packing tape and storing them in a non-metal leakproof container with a lid (such as a plastic bucket).

While it is not a requirement for households to recycle batteries, putting non-alkaline batteries in the trash or in curbside recycling carts/bins can pose a risk to garbage collectors, solid waste transfer stations and landfills because of the potential for the batteries to catch on fire, especially if damaged by equipment. Many types of consumer electronics are banned from landfill or incinerator disposal in Wisconsin and can be recycled through the [E-Cycle Wisconsin](#) program.

Requirements for managing batteries from non-households

Batteries generated by businesses, schools, institutions, governments and other non-households are subject to universal waste requirements and must be properly managed based on the battery type. Some batteries may be put in the trash, but others must be recycled or managed as hazardous waste. See the publication below for a guide to managing different battery types.

- [Battery Recycling for Businesses](#)
- [How to Handle Universal Waste: Batteries \(WA-1809\)](#)

Requirements and safety procedures for battery collectors, transporters and recyclers

Those who collect batteries (from households or non-households), transport them, remove them from products (such as electronics) or recycle them must follow universal and hazardous waste requirements and U.S. Department of Transportation regulations. There are also several best management practices designed to prevent fires.

As the number of battery-containing devices increases, along with the number of different battery chemistries, it is important to make sure you store used batteries safely. If you collect and ship batteries, there are additional safety requirements and considerations.

- [Management of Universal Waste in Wisconsin](#)
- [Call2Recycle® battery safety information and training resources](#)
- [U.S. Department of Transportation information on safe battery transportation requirements](#)

Finding battery recycling locations

Reduce waste at the source by buying rechargeable batteries whenever possible. When your rechargeable batteries come to the end of their lifespan, they can also be recycled. Alkaline batteries may be put in the trash, but some battery retailers or other recycling locations may accept alkaline batteries for a small fee.

Do NOT place batteries or electronics in curbside recycling carts or bins, because they may cause a fire if damaged by equipment in recycling trucks or facilities.

To find a recycler in your area for rechargeable or other batteries:

- visit [Call2Recycle®](#) or call toll-free 1-877-2-RECYCLE: many national retailers are participating in a non-profit program to recycle rechargeable batteries and have collection boxes in their stores;
- for electronics that contain batteries, go to [E-Cycle Wisconsin](#), to find a registered electronics collection site;
- contact your [local recycling program](#) to see if they provide for collection;
- visit the [Wisconsin Recycling Markets Directory](#)