

Battery Recycling

Americans purchase over four billion dry cell batteries every year which eventually will need to be discarded batteries into the solid waste stream. Although waste batteries are a small amount of the solid waste stream, they can be a concentrated source of some types of heavy metals. The main constituents of concern for human health and the environment include: cadmium, lead and mercury.

The following table shows the most common household batteries and the way to handle them at their end-of-life:

NON-RECHARGEABLE (DISPOSABLE)			
Type of Battery	Common Uses	Hazardous Component	Disposal/ Recycling Options
Carbon Zinc	Many household uses	None*	Household Garbage
Alkaline	Many household uses	None*	Household Garbage
Mercuric Oxide (Button)	Medical equipment	Mercury	Recycling Program
Silver Oxide (Button)	Calculators, watches, cameras	Silver	Recycling Program
Zinc-air (Button)	Hearing aids, pagers, cameras	Mercury	Recycling Program
Lithium	Computers, cameras	Lithium	Recycling Program

RECHARGEABLE (REUSABLE)			
Type of Battery	Common Uses	Hazardous Component	Disposal/ Recycling Options
Small Sealed Lead-Acid	Tools, camcorders	Lead and Acid	Recycling Program
Alkaline	Many household uses	**	Household Garbage
Nickel-Cadmium	Smoke alarms, tools, household uses	Cadmium	Recycling Program
Nickel-Zinc	Cellular and cordless phones, cordless power tools, laptop computers, PDAs, two-way radios, camcorders, remote control toys, and other cordless products	***	Recycling Program

* Since 1993, domestically produced alkaline and carbon zinc batteries contain no added mercury and are essentially mercury-free.

**Since early 1995, rechargeable alkaline batteries contain no added mercury and are essentially mercury-free.

***A non-toxic, safe, high performance rechargeable Ni-Zn battery.

Alkaline Batteries

Today's standard alkaline household batteries have been re-engineered so that the components in them are of low toxicity, making them safe to dispose of with your normal trash. However, some communities will accept alkaline batteries for recycling. Contact your local recycling coordinator for more information. You can also do a web search to find companies that will accept alkaline batteries for recycling. Please note, there may be a fee associated with recycling.

Button Batteries

There are locations that will accept button batteries for recycling – hearing aid distributors, watch stores and retail stores (call first).

Rechargeable Batteries

Reusable/rechargeable batteries are preferred over single-use batteries provided the rechargeable batteries are recycled after their useful life is over. The [NYS Rechargeable Battery Recycling Act](#) (29 kb) (Article 27, Title 18 of the Environmental Conservation Law) was signed into law on December 10, 2010. The law requires manufacturers of covered rechargeable batteries to collect and recycle the batteries statewide in a manufacturer-funded program at no cost to consumers. Consumers across the state will now be able to safely return to retailers rechargeable batteries, from a large number of electronic products, for recycling or proper management at the end of their useful life.

Small Sealed Lead-Acid Batteries

Retail stores that sell small sealed lead acid batteries are required to take them back for recycling. Also, many metal scrap dealers will take them (call first).

Communities with a Battery Recycling Program

Local Recycling Coordinator - Check your local listing or call (518) 402-8706. Our website also lists [names and numbers of local recycling coordinators](#).

Resources

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Materials Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7253
(518) 402-8706
recycling@gw.dec.state.ny.us

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