



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 38 – Monday, September 10 – Friday, September 15, 2025

Battery & Electronic Waste Recycling

Introduction

Think about how many devices you've used today that rely on batteries. Now ask yourself: do you know the safest and most responsible way to dispose of them once they no longer work? Most of us don't—and the result is millions of batteries and electronic devices piling up in landfills each year. This week's safety brief will explore the right way to dispose of everything from car batteries to cell phones so we can all make smarter, safer choices.

Monday - Battery Disposal

When a battery in your home or office dies, do you know the right way to get rid of it? Or even what the most sustainable option is? With so many wireless electronics in our lives, it's important to know what to do with your dead batteries. This can vary based on what they are used for. For instance, you should treat batteries in your TV remote differently from the rechargeable ones in your laptop or digital camera since they could be both hazardous and illegal to throw away, depending on where you live. This week we are going to talk about disposing of batteries properly.

Tuesday – Car Batteries

Traditional car and truck batteries contain both sulfuric acid and lead. These chemicals pose both physical and environmental risks. Improper disposal of car and truck batteries is illegal in California, Florida, New York, North Carolina, Texas and several other states. Be sure to check your state and local regulations. These types of batteries must be disposed of at a hazardous waste facility to ensure proper disposal that protects soil and groundwater.

Wednesday – Rechargeable Batteries

Rechargeable batteries come in all shapes and sizes and are used across a wide variety of areas in your lives, from your car to your wireless phone. Many of the materials within these batteries, such as lead, plastic, and metal are recyclable. No rechargeable battery should be thrown in the trash, and it is illegal in some states because rechargeable batteries contain heavy metals which can be hazardous to the environment. Home improvement or office supply stores often accept these products for recycling by hosting a drop box from an organization like Call2Recycle. To learn more about recycling rechargeable batteries and find your state's laws and battery recycling centers.

Thursday – Electronic Waste

The use of electronic products has grown substantially in recent years, changing the ways we communicate, access information and entertain ourselves. Americans now own approximately 24 electronic products per household, and the annual electronics sales in the US are greater than \$206 billion. The rapid increase in consumer electronics purchases has created a growing stream of used electronics devices in need of appropriate disposal. Electronic devices like TVs, computer monitors, fax machines, copiers, microwaves can often be disposed of at home improvement or office supply stores. Also, be sure to check your local retailers before disposing of any of these items yourself. Consider recycling and donating these items to Goodwill Industries. They can refurbish some items for resale in their retail stores.



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Friday – The Pile of Denial

Almost every home and office has a pile of unwanted and no longer used electronic devices. And in the recycling electronics world, this is called “the pile of denial.” This pile typically starts to grow over time, and normally it’s when someone is moving that they finally get rid of these items.

It is best to recycle your electronics as soon as you know you are done using them. This is because electronic depreciation happens fast, so by the time the item or device gets to a recycler nearly all the initial value is gone, making it difficult to refurbish.

Lastly, before you recycle or donate your computer or cell phone, be sure to erase your data from the device. You must do more than just delete files. You must wipe the hard drive so it cannot be received by anyone else. Sometimes your recycler can do this for you for an extra charge. You can also download free software which will overwrite your data.