



## **HOW TO DISPOSE OF BATTERIES**

Batteries power nearly every aspect of our everyday life. From our home security systems to our cell phones to our vehicles, we rely on these little energy packs to keep us on track. When a battery dies, it's important to know how to dispose of batteries in the correct way. Otherwise, you could be responsible for dangerous reactions caused by the materials in certain batteries, or environmental pollution for centuries to come.

## **WHY RECYCLE BATTERIES**

You may be wondering: why can't I just toss them? There are a few convincing arguments for the recycling of batteries, but the most compelling include environmental health and sustainability.

Many batteries contain metals necessary to keep complex devices running —but those metals can cause serious harm to the environment if they make their way into landfills. Mercury, cadmium, lead, nickel, and other commonly used battery components are dangerous to both our ecosystems and human health, and should be carefully handled.

Other batteries are made with minerals such as lithium, graphite and cobalt. These may not pose as much of a threat to the environment, but they have been deemed critical minerals by the United States Geological Survey. That means they need to be preserved when possible. Recycling your batteries that contain these ingredients means they can be reused for years to come.

## **HOW TO DISPOSE OF BATTERIES OF EVERY KIND**

Have a drawer full of old batteries you just don't know what to do with? Fear not. We break down how to dispose of batteries without making your garbage man — or mother nature — mad.

## **Single-use Alkaline and Zinc-Carbon**

Alkaline batteries are some of the most common household batteries. Think the AA, AAA, C, and D batteries, along with 9-volts that you use to power your smoke detector, remote control, alarm clock, and many other household items. These household batteries can be returned to Staples, Office Depot, Lowes Hardware, Home Depot and other similar stores which have "takeback battery" programs. The Brunswick County Rt. #17 Transfer Station/Landfill also accepts these types of batteries for recycling. The drop-off point is the small building next to the Office Headquarters on the right as you enter the Landfill property. (Any questions please contact us through our website under the Recycling FAQ page)

## **Single-use Coin Batteries**

These batteries, as you may have assumed, are small, flat, and circular—like a coin. They are often used to power watches, some remotes, hearing aids, and thermometers.

Coin batteries should not be thrown into the regular household trash. Instead, they should be carefully disposed of either by taking them to sites that feature specific battery recycling centers, retailers with battery takeback services and drop-off sites, or by contacting one of your local household hazardous waste collection programs.

Take care to check the makeup of a coin battery before recycling, as that will affect how you dispose of them. While older versions may be made with heavy metals, many newer coin batteries are lithium. We'll cover lithium battery recycling hazards and guidelines below!

## **Single-use Lithium Batteries**

Single-use lithium batteries, which in some cases may be coin batteries or look like alkaline batteries, need to be recycled in any of the ways mentioned above: Battery recycling center, battery takeback services, or your local household hazardous waste collection programs

Doing so with lithium batteries, though, takes a bit more care. If two lithium battery terminal ends touch, they can spark—and a spark can quickly turn into a flame. To avoid any disasters, make sure to put each battery in its own separate plastic bag, or tape the battery up with electrical tape.

When it comes to larger lithium-ion batteries like those used in electric vehicles, you need to return those to the manufacturers or auto dealer.

## Rechargeable

Like single use batteries, rechargeable batteries come in a few different varieties. Unlike their disposable counterparts, though, all rechargeable batteries need to be recycled or collected by a hazardous waste program: they should never be thrown out.

Most rechargeable batteries are made up of one of the following:

- Nickel Cadmium (May be found in cordless power tools, video cameras, and digital cameras.)
- Nickel Metal Hydride (May be found in cell phones, cordless power tools, and digital cameras.)
- Nickel Zinc (May be found in some digital cameras and other small electronics.)
- Lithium Ion (May be found in cell phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, and some children's toys. Your Macbook and iPhone are powered by these batteries.)
- Small-sealed lead acid (May be found in emergency lighting and hospital equipment.)

If you can remove the battery from the device, you can then choose one of the following methods of recycling for the battery itself.

- Bring them to drop-off centers like those set up by the [Call2Recycle program](#). You can find these at retailers like Home Depot, Lowes, and Staples.

- Mail them to recycling programs. Remember to take any necessary precautions like taping up terminal ends and bagging batteries separately!
- Bring them to your local hazardous household waste collection center.

If the battery can not be removed from the device, you can choose one of the following methods to recycle the entire thing.

- Bring the device to a retailer that offers an electronics recycling program, such as Best Buy.
- If the manufacturer itself has a recycling program, contact them about where and when you can drop off your electronics.
- Bring them to your local hazardous household waste collection center.

### Car Batteries: Lead Acid

Car batteries should never be thrown into the trash. Instead, you can drop these off at a local auto parts store or waste collection center.

If you opt to ship a battery to a recycling center or program, though, take extra care: if lead acid batteries and lithium batteries are recycled and crushed together, they can cause an explosion.