

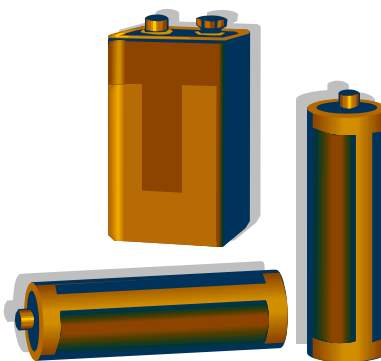
Household Batteries



Batteries come in many shapes, sizes, and chemistries, from the small zinc air batteries used in hearing aids to the twenty-pound lead-acid battery in your car. Many of these contain heavy metals such as lead and cadmium. When disposed of improperly, the heavy metals may leach into soil, ground water, and surface water.

Alkaline and zinc-carbon

Alkaline and zinc carbon are nonrechargeable batteries that are typically used in flashlights, radios, toys, smoke detectors and many other products in your home. Although these used to contain mercury, those made after July, 1996 have a very small amount of mercury and are no longer considered hazardous. These may be disposed of in the trash. If you have one that was made prior to 1996 it should be brought to a Regional Collection Center.



Rechargeable Batteries

Rechargeable batteries are used in a growing number of electronics, cordless power tools, cell phones, etc. These include nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) lithium-ion (Li-ion), nickel metal hydride, (Ni-MH), and small sealed lead acid (SSLA) batteries. Eventually the battery will no longer hold a charge and will need to be replaced. The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC) has formed a network of locations that will accept rechargeable batteries for recycling.



Household Batteries



Button Cell

Button batteries are the small batteries commonly found in hearing aids, watches, toys, and calculators. Button cell mercuric oxide batteries can no longer be sold in the United States and have been replaced with zinc-air and silver-oxide button cells. Although zinc-air and silver-oxide batteries have a much lower amount of mercury, they still should be brought to a Regional Collection Center.



Lead-Acid Batteries

Lead-acid batteries contain an average of 17.5 pounds of lead and 1.5 gallons of sulfuric acid. Improperly disposed lead-acid batteries can corrode and release lead and sulfuric acid. The lead and sulfuric acid seep into the ground and contaminate the soil and the ground water. Leaking lead-acid batteries disposed in household trash also pose a danger to refuse collectors. State law has prohibited land disposal of lead-acid batteries since 1990. Retailers are required to accept a used battery in exchange when a new one is purchased. For a list of retailers who are willing to accept lead-acid batteries, call the Solid Waste Education office at 563-588-7933.



A few things to remember:

- Remove the batteries before disposing of a product.
- Buy batteries only as you need them as they do have a limited shelf life.
- Don't mix old batteries with new ones or rechargeable ones with disposable batteries.
- Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible and recycle them when they can no longer hold a charge.

For more information on asbestos disposal, contact the DMASWA Regional Collection Center at 563-589-1720 or the DMASWA Education Office at 563-588-7933.