



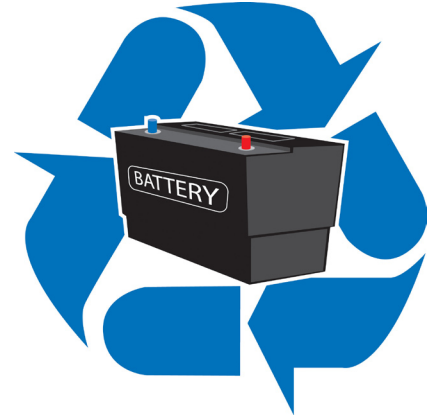
Batteries

What are Batteries? Batteries are used to store an electric charge for later use. They range in size from a few grams to over 100 lbs and are made of a comparable variety of materials. The hazards associated with improper disposal of old batteries are also varied. Car batteries are especially toxic as they contain liquid acid. Modern rechargeable batteries are also potentially harmful to the environment as they use specialty metals such as lithium and cadmium.

What are the Various Types of Batteries? Batteries can be separated into two basic groups; disposable and rechargeable. Disposables are most commonly the ubiquitous alkaline battery but also include other single use forms such as zinc-carbon batteries. Rechargeable batteries are constructed of at least twenty different chemical compositions. They include car batteries (or lead acid), power tool batteries, computer and cell phone batteries and many more.

Are Batteries Toxic? The materials used in all batteries are potentially dangerous to humans and the environment. The laws governing their disposal, however, vary greatly in their scope. Some states and all of Europe require special handling for all batteries, while other laws cover only lead acid batteries or rechargables. Federal standards banned the use of mercury in alkaline batteries in the mid 1990s, which successfully removed the alkaline's most toxic material. While the lack of mercury makes alkalines less toxic, they continue to pose an environmental risk when not handled appropriately. In New Mexico only lead acid batteries are regulated, and are banned from solid waste disposal facilities. There are, however, numerous drop-off spots for collection of other rechargeable batteries.

Can We Collect Batteries for Recycling? As with all materials, batteries should only be collected if there is a market to send them too. Fortunately, there are numerous markets available for recycling. Lead acid batteries are recycled nearly everywhere they are sold. Junk yards and scrap metal recyclers also typically handle lead acid batteries. Other rechargables can also be readily recycled. The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation offers a mail-back program where they will provide collection containers, shipping and processing of old batteries. Alkaline batteries, on the other hand, are more challenging as the cost to recycle them can be significant. In fact there are very few facilities able to process alkaline batteries.



Battery Recyclers & Information

RBRC

1-877-723-1297 ext. 250 or
www.rbrc.org

Interstate Batteries

1-888-USA-4001
www.corporate.interstatebatteries.com/recycling

Battery Solutions

800-852-8127
www.batteryrecycling.com

Battery Council International

www.batterycouncil.org/LeadAcidBatteries/BatteryRecycling/tabid/71/Default.aspx

EHSO (Environmental Health and Safety Online)

www.ehso.com/ehshome/batteries.php