



# Battery Recycling

Once a battery is used up or no longer useful, the battery's chemistry will determine the best way to dispose of it. Look on the battery's label or packaging to identify what it is made of and use the guide to find a safe disposal method.

Many stores that sell electronics or batteries will accept used batteries. Make sure to call before bringing batteries in for recycling. Most counties have household hazardous waste (HHW) collection sites. Go to [rethinkrecycling.com](http://rethinkrecycling.com) or [recyclemoreminnesota.org](http://recyclemoreminnesota.org) to get contact information for your county solid waste office.

## What's the Problem?

In the United States, over two billion batteries are purchased every year. Some of the batteries contain toxic metals like mercury, lead, cadmium, and silver, which can contaminate water and air when they are incinerated or disposed of in landfills. Eventually these toxins will make their way into living tissue and have negative health effects.

## Batteries safe to place in the trash:

- Carbon Zinc
- Alkaline- If alkaline batteries were purchased in or before 1993, take them to your HHW collection site.

**Description:** Mainly produces in A, AA, AAA, C, D, N, 9-volt, and lantern. These batteries are not rechargeable.

**Found In:** Calculators, portable stereos, radios, compact disc players, most toys, flashlights, smoke detectors, clocks, and other products.

## Single-use batteries that need to be taken to retailers or HHW sites:

- Button- Place tape around each button battery
- Lithium- Lithium batteries may be reactive. Place each battery in a separate plastic bag or place electrical tape around the battery terminals.

**Description:** Lithium batteries are cylindrical and are produced in various sizes. Button batteries may be alkaline, lithium, mercuric oxide, nickel cadmium, silver oxide, or zinc air. They may be combined in stacks to produce cylindrical batteries.

**Uses:** Photographic and high-drain applications, medical devices, smoke detectors, handheld games, hearing aids, keyless remotes, watches, and other products.

### **Rechargeable batteries need to be recycled. They include:**

- Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd)
- Lithium Ion (Li-ion)
- Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH)
- Sealed Lead Acid (Pb)
  - To recycle, check with local stores, or find one by calling the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corp. at 1-800-8-BATTERY or on their website [www.rbrc.org](http://www.rbrc.org).

**Description:** Mainly produced in the following sizes : D, C, AAA, AA, 9-volt, and battery packs of various shapes and sizes.

**Uses:** Cell phones, cordless phones, laptop computers, personal care products, power tools, video cameras, and many other products.

### **Vehicle Batteries need to be recycled:**

- Lead Acid- By law, auto battery retailers must take up to five lead acid batteries from consumers free of charge.

**Uses:** Cars, motorcycles, boats, golf carts, and other large automotive items.

### **Battery Handling Tips:**

- Store batteries in a vented plastic bucket or sturdy cardboard box. Do not place an airtight lid on containers. Battery gases trapped in containers may cause dangerous situations.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling batteries, or wear gloves.
- If storing batteries together, place non-conducting, like electrical, tape over the terminals or place batteries in individual plastic bags to prevent short-circuiting.
- Do not attempt to discharge batteries by short-circuiting terminals.
- Older batteries may rust or leak after long periods of storage. If a battery looks dirty or has a white, film-like substance on the terminals, be careful when handling the battery. Do not touch the dirty area and place it in a bag for recycling or disposal.

### **Use Rechargeables!**

According to the RBRC, rechargeable batteries can be used up to 1,000 times before they are recycled and the metals are recovered. They have a greater initial cost, but are much less expensive in the long run.

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