

# Household battery recycling and disposal

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

Many stores that sell electronics or batteries will accept used batteries. Be sure to call first.

Most counties have household hazardous waste (HHW) collection sites. Find yours by contacting

your county solid waste office, or contact the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: [www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw) or call 651-296-6300, 800-657-3864 toll free.



## Rechargeable batteries: recycle at retailer or HHW site



Nickel cadmium (Ni-Cd)



Lithium ion (Li-ion)



Nickel metal hydride (Ni-MH)



Small sealed lead acid (Pb)

► To recycle, check with your local store, or find one by calling the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corp. at **1-800-8-BATTERY**, or going to their web site at [www.rbrc.org](http://www.rbrc.org).



## Single-use batteries: take to retailer or HHW site



Button



Lithium

► Lithium batteries may be reactive. Place each in a separate plastic bag or place non-conductive (electrical) tape over the battery terminals.

► Place tape around each button battery.



## Vehicle batteries: take to retailer



Lead acid

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



## Single-use batteries: safe to place in trash.



Carbon zinc



Alkaline

► **Alkaline exceptions:** if purchased in 1993 or earlier, take to your HHW collection site.

## What's the problem?

Each year over two billion household batteries are purchased in the United States to power a variety of products. Some household batteries may contain toxic metals like mercury, lead, cadmium, and silver, which can contaminate our air and water when the batteries are incinerated or disposed of in a landfill. Eventually these metals can accumulate in living tissue and cause adverse health effects.

### Battery handling tips

- ▶ Store batteries in a vented plastic bucket or sturdy cardboard box. Do not place an airtight lid on the container. Gases that vent from batteries may be trapped and create a potentially dangerous situation.
- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water after handling batteries, or use gloves.
- ▶ If storing batteries together, place non-conducting (electrical) tape over terminals or place individual batteries in plastic bags to prevent short-circuiting.
- ▶ Do not attempt to discharge a battery by short-circuiting the terminals.
- ▶ Older batteries may rust and leak after long periods of storage. If a battery appears to be dirty or have a white, film-like substance around the terminals, use caution when handling the battery, and do not touch the dirty area. Place it in a bag for recycling or disposal.

### Use rechargeables!

- ▶ According to the RBRC, these batteries can be recharged up to 1,000 times before a recycling facility takes them apart and their metals are recovered. Like compact fluorescent bulbs, while the initial cost is higher, you save money in the long run.



**Get more information on household hazardous wastes**, including safe disposal or paints, solvents, yard chemicals, and more. Contact your county solid waste office, or find your local HHW program: [www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hhw) or call 651-296-6300, 800-657-3864 toll free.



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Control Agency**