

Proper Disposal Batteries

A Guide to Doing it right in Lawrence and Mercer Counties

About Batteries

Simply put, batteries supply electric power. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, ranging from tiny hearing aid batteries to room-sized batteries used for emergency situations. For most of us, the majority of batteries we encounter will be smaller than a car battery.

There are two forms of batteries. Single-use batteries, also known as primary batteries, and rechargeable batteries, also known as secondary batteries. Alkaline batteries, a type of single-use battery, are the most common household battery.

What are the concerns about improperly discarded batteries?

Batteries consist of different chemical combinations used to produce charges. Many of the materials used to manufacture rechargeable batteries are hazardous. This includes Cadmium (highly toxic, known carcinogen), Lead (health hazard), Lithium (corrosive, reactive, flammable, and health hazard), and Nickel (probable carcinogen, health hazards, and catalyst). Other elements of concern include Magnesium and Zinc. Batteries thrown into your trash and sent to a landfill can still pollute the environment with these elements.

What are the rules concerning batteries?

Pennsylvania law requires the recycling of lead acid batteries, such as automotive batteries. Laws permit households to place other types of spent batteries in their trash. However, batteries are recyclable and this practice is not recommended because of their hazardous nature and threat to human health and environment.

Where can I recycle my spent batteries?

Lead Acid Batteries—Many options exist for lead acid batteries.

- Recycle your battery when you buy a new one. Places that sell batteries are required to accept batteries from customers in a quantity of at least equal to the number purchased.
- Take them to a scrap yard. Most local scrap yards accept lead acid batteries.
- Take them to a hazardous waste collection. This option likely requires a fee.

Rechargeable Batteries—This includes Nickel-Cadmium, Nickel-Metal-hydride, and Lithium Ion batteries that are commonly found in cell phones, power tools, and laptops. This also includes the rechargeable counter-parts to the traditional alkaline batteries used for flashlights, toys, and remotes.

- Rechargeable batteries can be taken to Battery Giant, Battery Warehouse, Home Depot, Lowes, and Staples.
- They can also be taken to a hazardous waste collection. This option will likely require a fee.

Single Use Alkaline Batteries—Few local options exist and they normally have fees associated with them.

- Take them to a hazardous waste collection event or operation.
- Use a mail-in program such as batterysolutions.com.

