

HANDHELD BATTERY RECYCLING

Guidelines for offices

Why should we recycle?

Batteries are a risk to human health and the environment if disposed of inappropriately. They also contain valuable metals such as cadmium, zinc, manganese, cobalt and rare earth metals that may be recovered to reduce the use of finite natural resources.

What can we recycle?

There are many types of batteries used in offices and they all have different chemistries. Single-use batteries (non-rechargeable) can be either alkaline, zinc-carbon or lithium. These are used in products such as clocks, cameras and remote controls. Rechargeable batteries are generally either lithium ion, nickel metal hydride or nickel cadmium. These are found in such products as mobile phones, laptops and power tools.

Rechargeable **lead acid batteries**, typically used for cars and backup power for computers, need to be separated from other batteries for recycling. Heavy batteries (> 500g) also need to be separated for recycling.

How can we recycle safely?

Used batteries are potentially hazardous, so they need to be stored and handled carefully. Some of the materials inside batteries are toxic and may damage skin and clothes if the battery is damaged or leaking. Batteries must be kept away from sunlight or heat.

See over the page for more advice on safe handling of batteries for recycling.



Australian Battery Recycling Initiative

The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative is a not-for-profit association established in 2008 to promote responsible environmental management of batteries at end of life. More information on battery recycling can be found on their website at www.batteryrecycling.org.au.



Where can we find a recycling service provider?

Battery collection and recycling services are provided by waste management or specialised battery recycling companies, normally on a fee-for-service basis. Some of these have purpose-built collection containers. The cost will depend on location and the types of batteries being recycled.

Used batteries are defined as both a 'hazardous waste' and a 'dangerous good', which means that they are subject to state and federal government regulations. Make sure that your service provider is licensed and can demonstrate that they comply with all regulatory requirements.

The Australian Battery Recycling Initiative's website contains contact information for companies that can provide a battery collection and recycling service.

NOTE: The information provided here is general in nature. Organisations must do their own research to understand their legal obligations and to ensure that they are fully compliant.

How to recycle safely

DO

- Nominate a person to be responsible for the recycling program and document the procedure.
- Use a plastic collection container provided by the recycling contractor (batteries are heavy so the container needs to be strong).
- Make sure the container is vented (to avoid a possible build-up of pressure).
- Only use containers that are approved to hold Dangerous Goods. Refer to ABRI's packaging guidelines for used handheld batteries (www.batteryrecycling.org.au).
- Make sure that children are not able to access the container and its contents (this removes the risk of swallowing and contact with chemicals).
- Ensure that the container label is visible to all and that the information is clear.
- Store batteries in a cool, dry location.
- Protect against short circuit by taping over the terminals of any lithium based batteries (including button cells) and any batteries that have both terminals on one side (e.g. 6V & 9V). If a battery has lead wires these should be removed or the bare wire ends covered in sticky tape.
- Remove batteries from obsolete or broken electronic products and recycle them.
- Place leaking or damaged batteries in a clear plastic bag and take it to a waste management centre or hazardous waste collection point for disposal.
- Practice good manual handling and lifting procedures.
- Wash your hands with soap after handling batteries.
- Have appropriate firefighting equipment on site.

DON'T

- Don't leave the container in an unsupervised area with uncontrolled access.
- Don't use a metal container (to avoid the risk of short circuits).
- Don't accept batteries that don't fit through the container opening.
- Don't damage or hide the battery label (the recycler will need to identify the battery).
- Don't store batteries near corrosive chemicals.
- Don't store batteries outside or in a humid place (they need to remain dry).
- Don't touch leaking or damaged batteries (use gloves) and clean up any spilled material carefully.
- Don't move the collection container unnecessarily and place it in a stable area.
- Don't recycle leaking or damaged batteries.