

Your Role in Electronics Recycling

A guide for recycling responsible units and other local governments

Wisconsin's electronics recycling law bans most electronics from landfills and incinerators. The law also requires manufacturers of certain electronics to help pay for responsible recycling of used electronics from households and K-12 schools in Wisconsin. Recyclers and collectors can choose to participate in the manufacturer-funded program called E-Cycle Wisconsin. Registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors with permanent or temporary sites can be found in most counties, and many also host one-day collection events.

Local governments that are responsible units (RUs) for residential recycling have specific requirements under the electronics recycling law. Other local units of government can choose to participate in the program as recyclers or collectors. Collecting electronics is voluntary for all local governments.

RU outreach requirements

The law requires RUs to educate their residents about the electronics disposal ban, the importance of recycling and local recycling opportunities.

The law does not require RUs to use specific methods to educate residents about electronics recycling. We encourage RUs, at a minimum, to include e-cycling information in their existing outreach efforts (for example, on local government websites, in tax bill fliers, community letters and/or signs posted at recycling drop-off sites). Many RUs, especially those that collect electronics, may want to do additional outreach.

Free E-Cycle Wisconsin outreach materials, including brochures, fliers, posters, newsletter templates, and advertisements are available on the DNR website. You can order printed copies of publications for free. The DNR can also provide limited quantities of promotional materials, such as pencils, stickers and temporary tattoos, for community outreach events.

No matter which methods your RU chooses, your e-cycling outreach needs to include information on the following three components:

- ✓ the disposal ban
- ✓ why it is important to recycle electronics
- ✓ how residents, schools and businesses can recycle their electronics

Disposal ban background information

The following electronics are banned from landfills and incinerators in Wisconsin and should be recycled:

- × Televisions
- × Computers (desktop, laptop, netbook and tablet computers)
- × Desktop printers (including those that scan, fax and/or copy and 3-D printers)
- × Computer monitors
- × Other computer accessories (including mice, keyboards and speakers)
- × DVD players, VCRs and DVRs
- × Fax machines
- × Cellphones



Many electronics recyclers accept other electronics like stereo equipment, mp3 players, digital cameras and other hand-held devices. Check with recyclers or collection sites near you for a full list of what they accept.



Background information on why it is important to e-cycle

Electronics contain valuable reusable materials, including plastics, metals and glass. Recycling or reusing these materials lessens environmental impacts and economic costs by reducing the need for virgin materials in new products.

Electronics also contain harmful materials, including lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, other heavy metals and chemical flame retardants. When improperly disposed of, these chemicals can pollute our soil and water and impact human health. Many electronics contain rechargeable lithium ion batteries, which pose a fire risk and must be managed properly. Improperly handled e-waste also poses health risks to workers in the United States and in developing countries.

Background information on how to recycle electronics

If your community collects electronics, you can provide “how to e-cycle” information simply by advertising the location, hours, and any other details, such as fees or restrictions on size or type of electronics accepted at your site. Alternatively, you may direct residents to the DNR’s list of registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collection sites and manufacturer mail-back programs, by visiting dnr.wi.gov and searching “ecycle.”

Local government collection options

Local governments are not required to collect electronics for recycling. If you already collect electronics, you may continue to do so, either as a registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collector or outside of the program.

If there are few electronics collection sites in your area or if you have frequent problems with illegal dumping of electronics, you may want to consider hosting a collection event (perhaps as part of a Clean Sweep event) or establishing a permanent electronics collection site. Some communities have teamed up to offer electronics collection events or put out a joint request for bids from electronics recyclers.

For more information

Email DNR E-Cycle Wisconsin staff at DNRWae-cycling@wisconsin.gov.

Visit dnr.wi.gov and search “ecycle” for more information for local governments and electronics collectors, links to publications mentioned above and other free resources.



Bureau of Waste and Materials Management, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
DNRWae-cycling@wisconsin.gov
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