

Note: this article can be run as is or customized with local information. If you have questions, contact us at DNRWle-cycling@wisconsin.gov. You can also download graphics and images here: <https://wi-dnr.widencollective.com/portals/phhtxukj/E-CycleWisconsinoutreachresources>

Recycle your old electronics instead of trashing them

While it may be tempting to toss old cellphones in the trash or haul an outdated TV to the curb, state law bans most electronics from Wisconsin's landfills and incinerators. Instead, residents can use E-Cycle Wisconsin to recycle electronics at nearly 400 locations around the state.

Many electronics contain harmful materials like mercury, lead, cadmium and other heavy metals, as well as chemical flame retardants. These can pollute the environment or harm human health if electronics aren't recycled responsibly. Electronics also contain valuable materials, including steel, gold, silver, copper and plastic. More than 90% of the materials in most electronics can be reused or recycled.

Many collection sites charge a fee to help cover the full cost of responsibly recycling some electronics, especially TVs and monitors. Electronics manufacturers help pay for recycling under E-Cycle Wisconsin, but their payments do not always cover the full cost of collection and recycling.

The costs of avoiding a recycling fee at an established collector could be much higher than people realize. Information stored on computers, cellphones, printers and other devices, like credit card numbers, social security numbers and passwords, can be accessed long after the computer or phone stops working. Responsible recyclers protect personal data by handling recycled electronics securely and destroying or completely wiping hard drives and other memory.

The DNR maintains an up-to-date list of collection sites, upcoming collection events and free mail-back programs registered with E-Cycle Wisconsin. Go to dnr.wi.gov and search "ecycle" for details..