

RECYCLING OF COMPUTERS, COMPUTER MONITORS, TELEVISIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Because of technological advances that have turned every household into an electronics haven, many people are asking how they can recycle or properly dispose of their old or unusable electronic devices.

Many consumer electronic products contain heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and mercury as well as other materials that are better kept out of the environment. In fact, the typical cathode ray tube computer monitor (non-flat screen model) contains four to seven pounds of lead. Televisions, depending on their size, may contain even more lead.

The Covered Device Recycling Act

A new state law was passed in November of 2010, the Covered Device Recycling Act (Act 108 of 2010), or CDRA, which addresses the recycling and disposal of certain “covered” electronic devices in Pennsylvania. **“Covered Devices” include desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals, and televisions.**

The most notable impacts of the CDRA on Pennsylvania residents will be the establishment of commonwealth-specific manufacturer collection and recycling programs for covered devices and the upcoming disposal ban.

Manufacturer Recycling Programs - Beginning Jan. 1, 2012, manufacturers of covered devices sold or offered for sale in Pennsylvania are required to make collection programs available to Pennsylvania residents for the recycling of their covered devices. Though not required, retailers may also offer collection programs. Both manufacturer and retailer collection programs for covered devices are required to be free of charge, unless a coupon, rebate or other financial incentive of equal or greater value is supplied.

Disposal Ban - Beginning Jan. 24, 2013, landfills and other solid waste disposal facilities in Pennsylvania will no longer be allowed to accept covered devices or their components. The CDRA requires that these devices be recycled from that point forward. The disposal ban may affect the curbside collection of these items by municipal waste pickup programs, unless the program is specific to electronic materials.

(Note: Costs for permanent collection sites and one-day events sponsored by your county or local municipality will continue to be off-set by grants from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), if they are not part of a manufacturer program.)

Though these new recycling requirements for computers, monitors and televisions will not take effect until Jan. 1, 2012, DEP urges citizens to know the facts and take steps now to “reduce, reuse and recycle” these and other electronic devices, rather than discard them.

For instance, in the case of computers, DEP strongly recommends that residents:

- **Reduce** the need to purchase a replacement computer by buying one with ample capacity for upgrades, selecting one that offers a buy-back option, or leasing instead of buying.
- **Reuse** a computer, for example, by giving it as a gift for a student graduation or other occasion, by selling it through the want-ads, or by donating it to a school or a nonprofit organization.
- **Recycle** a computer by taking it to a collection location that will send it to an electronics recycler.

Why can't I just put my electronic devices out with the trash?

Prior to Jan. 24, 2013, DEP regulations do not prohibit households from setting electronic devices out with regular household trash; and even when the disposal ban goes into effect, it will apply only to desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals and televisions. However, DEP urges you to do your part for the environment by recycling or reusing as many of your electronic devices as possible in order to limit the number of those items and their hazardous components from entering the environment through landfills and other disposal activities.

If you must discard an electronic device, DEP urges you to check with your municipality or county recycling coordinator to find out about local options for proper disposal. To find information on your county recycling coordinator, visit DEP's website at www.depweb.state.pa.us, Select 'Waste,' 'Recycling,' 'Public Resources,' and then 'County Recycling Coordinators,' or contact the Recycling Hotline at 1-800-346-4242.

Who would want my used computer? It's an old model and it doesn't have many programs.

Remember, "One person's junk is another person's treasure." Because of the advent of computers, most businesses and even high school students don't use typewriters anymore. A friend, your children, a non-profit organization or a school might appreciate having your old computer, even if just for word processing.

Where can I take my electronic devices for recycling?

Many electronic items such as cell phones, computers and televisions can be recycled at local retailers that sell the items. And, beginning Jan. 1, 2012, the CDRA requires that retailers of computers, computer monitors and televisions provide customers with information on how and where to recycle these devices. You can also continue to recycle your electronics at local municipal or county recycling events.

DEP maintains lists of various electronics recycling opportunities and collection locations on its website including county, municipal, non-profit, and retailer and manufacturer sponsored collection programs. To view the current list, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us and select 'Electronics Recycling' from the 'DEP Programs A - Z' menu.

I don't want computers to end up in our landfills. What can I do to help?

Encourage your friends to join you in upgrading their computers when possible or in having their old computers properly recycled. Become aware of those around you who could benefit from the donation of a computer. Ask your municipality to consider sponsoring an annual or semi-annual collection of electronics if they do not already do so, or utilize your municipal electronics collection events or permanent collection sites if they are already established.

DEP offers grants to municipalities of up to 50 percent of the developmental and operational costs associated with an electronics collection.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the CDRA, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us (select 'Electronics Recycling' from the 'DEP Programs A - Z' menu), contact the **Recycling Hotline** at 1-800-346-4242 or contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Waste Management
Division of Waste Minimization and Planning
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8472
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8472
Telephone: 717-787-7382

For more information, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Electronics Recycling.