

Living **Green** Off-Campus

Batteries

Every day, whether we realize it or not, we use batteries. They power our flashlights, cell phones, i-pods, watches, computers, cars (if you drive a hybrid), clocks, remote controls and much more. What we probably don't think about though, is what happens to those batteries when they run out of juice. **How often have you tossed a dead battery into the trash?** I think we've all been guilty of that at one time or another.



Batteries let us do so many things, though they also carry a heavy (no pun intended) cost when they aren't disposed of properly. Take a look at some facts listed below and then check out my recommendations for battery disposal.

DYK

- The average citizen is using approximately 10 batteries and each household has approximately 32 batteries in use.
- Did you know that we (USA) purchase approximately **3 billion** batteries every year?
- Wet-cell batteries, which contain a liquid electrolyte, commonly power automobiles, boats, or motorcycles.
- Nearly 99 million wet-cell lead-acid car batteries are manufactured each year.
- A car battery contains 18 pounds of lead and one pound of sulfuric acid.
- Mercury was phased out of certain types of batteries in conjunction with the "Mercury-Containing and Rechargeable Battery Management Act," passed in 1996.
- **Recycling batteries keeps heavy metals out of landfills and the air.** Recycling saves resources because recovered plastic and metals can be used to make new batteries.
- **Household batteries contribute many potentially hazardous compounds to the municipal solid waste stream, including zinc, lead, nickel, alkalines, manganese, cadmium, silver, and mercury.**
- In 1989, 621.2 tons of household batteries were disposed of in the US, that's double the amount discarded in 1970.
- In 1986, 138,000 tons of lead-acid batteries were disposed of in the US
- Regular flashlight batteries can be disposed of in the trash (generally, some states, like California, have more restrictive rules) , though it is best to take them to a recycler.
- Mercury-oxide and silver-oxide button batteries are often collected by jewelers, pharmacies, and hearing-aid stores who sell them to companies that reclaim the metals.
- In 1993, 80 to 95% of automobile batteries were recycled

What can you do with those old batteries?

If you live in the **City of Long Branch**, you can take your household batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, etc.) to the Public Works Office at 636 Joline Avenue Long Branch, NJ. 07740. T: (732) 571-6520.

If you live in the **Township of Ocean** place your household batteries in a small container next to your commingled (bottles & cans) collection containers. Call the County's permanent Household Hazard Waste Site at 732-922-2234 for information relating to disposal of automotive batteries.

If you live in the **Borough of West Long Branch** you will need to contact the Borough at 732-229-1756 and ask to speak to the Public Works Department for more information.

If you live in the **Borough of Deal**, call the Public Works Department by calling 732-531-0953.

Final Thought

If you're in the habit of using standard batteries such as AA, AAA, C and D consider purchasing the rechargeable versions. Not only will you be saving money, but you will be living a greener life off-campus.

If you have any Living Green Off-Campus ideas that you would like to see in the future, shoot me an email.

Have a green week!