



Protect Yourself and Your Environment

What is electronic waste?




Electronic waste refers to all of the electronics people throw out each year when they become broken or obsolete. Electronic wastes include: televisions, computers, printers, fax machines, scanners, computer mice, keyboards, cell phones, etc.

Why is it a problem?



Because electronics are being developed so rapidly, electronic products are the fastest-growing portion of our solid waste stream. About 2 million tons of electronic waste were discarded in 2005, and between 80–85% of that ended up in a landfill, taking up a lot of valuable space in the landfill because they are not easily compactable.

What makes the waste toxic and what are the health effects?



Electronic devices contain materials that are not biodegradable and are potentially very toxic to humans and the environment.

LEAD is a major component of interconnects, solders, and cathode ray tubes (CRTs) in both TVs and PCs. Old CRTs might contain as much as 4 lbs. of lead. Chronic overexposure to lead can lead to central nervous system (CNS) damage, severe kidney disease, reproductive impairment, and decreased hemoglobin, leading to anemia.

MERCURY is often used to light up computer monitors or notebooks. It is dangerous to a developing fetus and can cause permanent damage to the kidneys and CNS.

BROMATED FLAME RETARDANTS were widely used in older plastic cables. These chemicals are potentially toxic to the liver, thyroid, and to neuro-development.

CADMIUM used to be a common component of rechargeable batteries for portable electronic devices, like laptop computers. Chronic effects resulting from cadmium exposure include kidney damage, lung cancer, prostate cancer, pulmonary emphysema, bone disease, anemia, teeth discoloration, and loss of smell.



What happens to the electronics that I drop off?

The electronics are disassembled and the parts that can be recycled such as the glass, plastic, and metals such as gold, silver and copper are

sent to recycling markets. Recovering the heavy metals through recycling means less mining has to be done, reducing fuel use and environmental disturbance.

What can I do to protect my personal information?



Remove any private information stored on your device's memory. To recycle your cell phone, terminate your service, clear the phone's memory (manually or with programs that can be found on the Internet), and destroy your phone's SIM card. If you decide to donate your computer or PDA, do not rely on manually deleting your files. A software store can help you find the right tools to protect your information.


What should I do with my electronic waste?



Homeowners can bring them to one of the two Household Hazardous Waste Facilities, where your items will be disposed of for free. These are located at:

6030 W. California Ave.
10873 S. 7200 W.

They are open from 8 a.m.–4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Business electronic waste will not be accepted. Another option is to donate e-waste to charities that can re-use them.

SLVHD 
Salt Lake Valley Health Department

