



Ware 4 Bins & Recycling

Bins, Trolleys, Recycling and Waste Containers

Battery Recycling

Battery Waste in the UK

The average household uses 21 batteries a year, all of which could be recycled, yet around 600 million UK household batteries (22,000 tonnes) are unnecessarily sent to landfill every year. Currently less than 3% of portable batteries in the UK are recycled, a much lower rate than in other European countries; 2002 data showed figures of between 14% (Spain) and 59% (Belgium). The 2006 EU Battery Directive requires battery recycling levels to reach 25% by 2012, rising to 45% of batteries (500 million units) placed on the market by 2016.



Why Recycle?

It is compulsory to comply with the batteries regulations if your business:

- manufactures batteries or equipment containing batteries
- imports batteries into the UK for sale
- distributes and sells batteries
- uses batteries
- collects waste batteries
- treats, recycles or exports waste batteries

Most batteries contain **heavy metals**, which cause environmental concern. When disposed of incorrectly, these heavy metals can leak into the ground when the battery casing corrodes, contributing to soil and water pollution and endangering wildlife. **Cadmium** is toxic to aquatic invertebrates and can accumulate in fish, which damages ecosystems and makes them unfit for human consumption. Some batteries, such as button cell batteries, also contain **mercury**, which has similarly hazardous properties. Recycling batteries ensures the safe disposal of these hazardous materials.

Recycling also reduces the need for virgin materials to be used in production, as the plastic and metal components of batteries can be reused, within both the battery and wider steel industries, benefiting the environment.

As the batteries will not be heading for landfill, costs are also reduced to businesses that pay landfill tax.

Battery Recycling

Batteries contain numerous different metals which can be reused as a secondary raw material, and there are well-established methods for the recycling of most batteries, including:

- Alkaline/Zinc carbon
- Nickel Cadmium (NiCd)
- Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH)
- Lithium Ion rechargeables (Li-ion)
- Single use Lithium
- Button cells (Mercury and Silver Oxide)

To help the UK meet EU battery recycling regulations, **from February 2010** shops selling more than 32kg of batteries a year (approx 345 four-packs of AA batteries) will have to provide battery recycling collection facilities in-store. This means there will be lots more places to take old batteries for recycling. Find your local battery recycling point at: <http://www.recyclenow.com/what-can-i-do-today/can-it-be-recycled/waste-electronics/battery-recycling.html>

BatteryBack (www.batteryback.org) will also be able to provide a collection service for all types of batteries from 1st January 2010. Ware 4 offer a range of battery recycling units that can be used to store used batteries ready for collection, including the popular 'Be Positive' battery bin and Battery Tubes. We also provide MITIE TREEHUGGER[®] battery boxes, which incorporate the cost of a battery collection service from MITIE (www.mitie.co.uk). Visit our website (www.ware4.co.uk) and explore the rest of November's Bin-zine to find out more.

Alternatives

There are also alternatives to single use batteries:

- Use rechargeable batteries wherever possible (you can even buy a solar powered recharger!) as the energy needed to manufacture a battery is around 50 times greater than the energy it gives out. These rechargeable batteries can also be recycled at selected recycling points once finished with. However, rechargeable batteries are not suitable for smoke alarms as they tend to run out suddenly, preventing the alarm from warning when battery power is low.
- Plug electrical equipment into the mains electricity.
- Buy appliances that use renewable energy: gadgets that are currently available include wind-up radios and torches, dynamo bicycle lights and solar powered calculators.

More Links

Find out more about the EU Batteries Directive at:

<http://www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs/legislation/future/63655.aspx?gclid=CPCA7uPS7p0CFWlr4wodTwhVMA>