



E-waste

Electronics are changing at a quick pace — you no sooner buy a new gadget and a better, faster and sleeker one is developed. Some consumers find it is less expensive for them to get rid of their old electronics and buy new ones than try to repair what they already have. So how do you dispose of your old electronics? We now know enough to recycle cans, plastic, paper and kitchen waste — but what about e-waste?

E-waste is electronic waste that includes unwanted electrical equipment and used batteries. E-waste should not be treated as garbage because the items may pose environmental hazards. Electronic equipment contains toxics such as mercury, lead, cadmium and arsenic and when burned, can produce dangerous toxins. We also want to keep e-waste out of our already growing landfills.

It is worth noting that parts that make up your electronics — steel, glass, copper, aluminum, plastics and precious metals — can be recovered and made into new products. You might consider donating or selling your electronic item if it is still in working order. Some people may consider buying your device for parts.

Here's a list of what can be considered e-waste:

- Amplifiers
- Audio and video players and recorders (e.g. DVD and VCR players)
- Cameras
- Cell phones
- Computers and related equipment (e.g. keyboard, mice)
- Copiers
- Fax machines
- Microwaves
- Monitors
- Pagers and PDAs
- Portable media players (e.g. mp3)
- Printers
- Radios
- Receivers
- Scanners
- Small appliances
- Speakers
- Telephones and answering machines
- Tuners
- Turntables
- Televisions
- Video projectors

What to do before you discard your e-waste

Protect your privacy: Get rid of all your personal information from computers and cell phones before recycling, selling or donating them. Here are some things to delete from your computer or cell phones:

- Contact lists (which may include addresses and phone numbers)
- Email contacts
- Messages
- All documents
- All files in the operating system recycle bin or trash folder
- Internet files
- All non-transferable software (most software is transferable if you have the original disks, product key or SIM card)

It is not as simple as just pressing the delete key and emptying your deleted items file. Consult the manufacturer's website or the owner's manual for information on how to permanently delete your personal information. For example, if you are discarding a cell phone, copy any information you might need from it and reset its memory before you get rid of it.

Be careful when moving heavy monitors or televisions:

In particular, cathode ray tubes, found in older televisions and monitors can shatter under pressure. Sturdy work gloves are a good idea when carrying or moving heavier electronics.

Throwing out your cell phone

When you have finished with your old cell phone or battery, do not throw either of them out. Your community may have a recycling program to help you dispose of them in a sustainable and responsible manner.

Check with your municipality or visit www.recyclemycell.ca, a national program led by the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association. It

allows you to find a drop-off location in your area that will accept your device — cell phones, smartphones, wireless devices, batteries and pagers — regardless of brand or condition.

If you can't make it to the drop-off locations, Recycle My Cell will accept your device through the mail, free of charge.

How to keep your e-waste out of landfills

Just like garbage pickup, different jurisdictions have different e-waste programs and different procedures for getting rid of equipment. You can bring your used electronics to a variety of municipal, not-for-profit, retail and other depots or special collection events. The items will either be reused or recycled in an environmentally responsible way.

To find out if there are certified e-waste programs where you live and to obtain more information about these programs, including a detailed list of electronic materials that can and cannot be sent to recycling centres, contact your municipality, your provincial or territorial consumer affairs office or the organizations listed in the “contacts for this topic” tab at the top of this page.

Certified e-waste programs typically work in the following manner:

- All companies that sell certain types of electronics (either at their store or online) need to be certified by the province or territory.
- The certified company who sells the equipment pays an environmental fee for each piece of equipment sold.
- Companies normally then charge this fee to their customers by adding it to the sales price of the items they sell.
- Having paid for the environmental fees at the time of purchase, consumers and businesses can then drop off unwanted electronic equipment, including computers and televisions, without charge at designated e-waste drop-off centres.
- The collected equipment is then shipped to certified recyclers to be recycled in an environmentally sound manner.

If there are no e-waste certification programs where you live, don't throw out your used electronic equipment in the garbage. Your community may have a recycling program to help you dispose of your e-waste in a sustainable and responsible manner. Check with your municipality for more information. From time to time large electronics stores offer a “take-back” day at local stores. Watch for information on local programs in your area.

Consumer tip:

Beware of firms that misrepresent themselves as certified and charge you non-legitimate environmental fees when you buy your electronics. In provinces with e-waste programs, only those companies who are certified pay environmental fees to help support take-back programs and it is only these companies that can sell you specific electronic equipment. Check with your provincial consumer affairs office to obtain the information.

Contacts For This Topic

Federal Consumer Affairs Office

Office of Consumer Affairs

235 Queen Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Telephone: 613 946 2576

Fax: 613-952-6927

Email: consumer.information@ic.gc.ca

Website: www.ic.gc.ca/consumer

Provincial and Territorial Consumer Affairs Offices

Alberta

Service Alberta, Consumer Contact Centre

3rd Floor Commerce Place

10155-102 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4G8

Telephone: 780-427-4088

Toll Free: 1-877-427-4088

Email: service.alberta@gov.ab.ca

Website: www.servicealberta.ca

British Columbia

Consumer Protection BC

#307-3450 Uptown Blvd
PO Box 9244

Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9J2

Telephone: 604-320-1667

Toll Free: 1-888-564-9963

Fax: 250-920-7181

Email: info@consumerprotectionbc.ca

Website: www.consumerprotectionbc.ca

Manitoba

Consumer Protection Office, Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs

302-258 Portage Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0B6

Telephone: 204-945-3800

Toll Free: 1-800-782-0067

Fax: 204-945-0728

Email: consumers@gov.mb.ca

Website: www.manitoba.ca/fs/cca/cpo

New Brunswick

Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs

Kings Place (King Tower)

440 King Street

Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5H8

Telephone: 506-453-2659

Fax: 506-444-4494

Email: justice.comments@gnb.ca

Website: www.gnb.ca/0062/rentalsman/index-e.asp

Newfoundland and Labrador

Service NL

PO Box 8700

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador A1B 4J6

Telephone: 709-729-4834

Toll Free: 1-877-968-2600

Fax: 709-729-6998

Email: gsinfo@gov.nl.ca

Website: www.gs.gov.nl.ca/index.html

Northwest Territories

Consumer Affairs, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs

5201-50th Avenue, Suite 600

PO Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 3S9
Telephone: 867-873-7125
Fax: 867-873-0309
Email: michael_gagnon@gov.nt.ca
Website: www.maca.gov.nt.ca/operations/consumer_affairs/index.html

Nova Scotia

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, Public Enquiries

Mail Room, 8 South
Maritime Centre
1505 Barrington Street

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K5
Telephone: 902-424-5200
Toll Free: 1-800-670-4357
Fax: 902-424-0720
Email: askus@gov.ns.ca
Website: www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/access/individuals/consumer-awareness.asp

Nunavut

Consumer Affairs, Department of Community and Government Services

267 Qaiqtuq Building
P.O. Box 440

Baker Lake, Nunavut X0C 0A0
Telephone: 867-793-3303
Toll Free: 1-866-223-8139
Fax: 867-793-3321
Email: Laupaluktuq@gov.nu.ca
Website: www.gov.nu.ca/english/

Ontario

Consumer Protection Branch, Ministry of Consumer Services

5775 Yonge Street, Suite 1500
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E5
Telephone: 416-326-8800
Toll Free: 1-800-889-9768
Phone (TTY): 416-229-6086
Phone (TTY) 2: 1-877-666-6545
Fax: 416-326-8665
Email: consumer@ontario.ca
Website: www.ontario.ca/consumerprotection

Prince Edward Island

Consumer Services, Office of the Attorney General

Shaw Building, 4th Floor
95 Rochford Street
PO Box 2000

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 7N8
Telephone: 902-368-4580
Telephone: 902-368-4550
Toll Free: 1-800-658-1799
Fax: 902-368-5283
Website: www.gov.pe.ca/jps/index.php3?number=1002799&lang=E

Quebec

Office de la protection du consommateur
400 Jean-Lesage Boulevard, Suite 450
Québec, Quebec G1K 8W4
Telephone: 418-643-1484
Toll Free: 1-888-672-2556
Fax: 418-528-0976
Website: www.opc.gouv.qc.ca

Saskatchewan

Consumer Protection Branch, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General
1919 Saskatchewan Drive, Suite 500
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 4H2
Telephone: 306-787-5550
Toll Free: 1-888-374-4636
Fax: 306-787-9779
Email: consumerprotection@gov.sk.ca
Website: www.justice.gov.sk.ca/cpb

Yukon

Consumer Services, Department of Community Services
Andrew Philipson Law Centre
2130 Second Avenue, 3rd Floor
PO Box 2703 (C-5)

Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6
Telephone: 867-667-5111
Toll Free: 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5111
Fax: 867-667-3609
Email: consumer@gov.yk.ca
Website: www.community.gov.yk.ca/consumer/index.html

Recycle My Cell

Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association
1110-130 Albert St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
Toll Free: 1-888-797-1740
Email: info@RecycleMyCell.ca
Website: www.recyclemycell.ca
