

## BATTERY DISPOSAL

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(For assistance, please contact EHS at (402) 472-4925, or visit our web site at <http://ehs.unl.edu/>)

Many different kinds of batteries are used in the workplace. Determining how to dispose of dead or unwanted batteries can be tricky. Listed below are the common types of batteries used and proper disposal methods for each. If you have unwanted batteries not listed here, please contact Environmental Health and Safety for disposal instructions.

- **Alkaline batteries** are commonly referred to as disposable or non-rechargeable batteries. They are often used in toys, flashlights, and some electronic equipment. They commonly come in sizes such as AAA, AA, C, D and 9-volt. Alkaline batteries are non-hazardous and can be thrown in the garbage.
- **Nickel-cadmium (ni-cad) batteries** are the most common type of rechargeable battery. These are often found in cellular phones, equipment, and some toys. They also come in standard sizes such as AA, but often come in widely assorted sizes and shapes. Most equipment that comes with a recharger probably uses ni-cad batteries. Some rechargeable batteries are **lead-gel batteries**. Handle these the same way as you would ni-cad batteries.

Ni-cad batteries contain regulated amounts of cadmium and, if not recycled through the supplier, must be handled as hazardous waste. When you buy a new ni-cad battery, ask the point of purchase to take your old battery. If the company supplying the new battery will not accept the old ones, either take the battery to a legitimate local recycler or tag for collection by EHS. See EHS SOP, ***Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures***.

- **Button batteries** are found in watches, calculators, hearing aids, and other small electronic devices. They often contain mercury, silver, or lithium, and should be returned to the manufacturer when purchasing a new battery or delivered to a legitimate local battery recycler. If this is not possible, they must be tagged for collection by EHS. Button batteries are also referred to as mercury/zinc, carbon/zinc, silver oxide, and zinc/air batteries.
- **Lead-acid batteries** include most car and motorcycle batteries. These batteries contain lead. Trade in the non-working lead acid battery at the time of purchase of a new battery. Several businesses in Lincoln will buy lead-acid batteries if you're not planning to purchase a replacement. Lead acid batteries can also be tagged for collection by EHS.

Most batteries (except alkaline) are subject to certain portions of Nebraska's Hazardous Waste Regulations. To ensure compliance with these regulations:

- Immediately upon removal from service, label the battery with the words "Universal Waste – Batteries" and the date the battery was removed from service.
- Promptly deliver the battery to a local battery recycler, return it to the manufacturer, or tag for pick up by EHS.
- If the battery is damaged or leaking, over pack it in a container with a tight-fitting lid (i.e., 5-gallon pail or something similar) and label the outer container as indicated above. Promptly tag it for collection by EHS.