

BATTERY DISPOSAL

(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.

Prior to disposal, recycling or collection by EHS all battery terminals must be securely insulated with a non conductive material to prevent any two batteries from short circuiting and generating heat during storage or transport. Battery terminals may be insulated with electrical tape; or batteries may be individually packaged in a non conductive material (e.g., plastic bag or original packaging).

- **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 regular trash. ***Alkaline batteries are the only battery type that can be disposed as regular trash once insulated.***
- **Lithium batteries** are commonly used in electric devices such as cameras and are often used as an alternative to alkaline batteries. Lithium batteries may be similar in appearance to alkaline batteries, but will be identified as lithium on the cover. These may not be disposed as regular trash. When you buy a new lithium 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 insulate and tag for collection by EHS. See EHS SOP, ***Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures***.
- **Rechargeable batteries** are usually one of the following varieties: Nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cad), lead-gel, or lithium-ion. Options for disposing of rechargeable batteries (or equipment containing rechargeable batteries in which the batteries are not easily removed) include exchange at the time of purchasing a new battery at the point of purchase; delivery to a legitimate local recycler; or insulating and tagging for collection by EHS. Rechargeable batteries must not be disposed as ordinary refuse. See EHS SOP, ***Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures***.

- **Button batteries** are found in watches, calculators, hearing aids, and other small electronic devices. Button batteries are also referred to as mercury/zinc, carbon/zinc, silver oxide, and zinc/air batteries. They often contain mercury, silver, or lithium, and should be returned to the manufacturer when purchasing a new battery; delivered to a legitimate local battery recycler; or insulated and tagged for collection by EHS.
- **Lead-acid batteries** include most vehicle type 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.
- Battery terminals must be securely insulated with a non conductive material to prevent any two batteries from short circuiting and generating heat during storage or transport. Battery terminals may be insulated with electrical tape, or batteries may be individually packaged in a non conductive material (e.g. plastic bag or original packaging).
- 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.