

RECYCLING OF COMPUTERS, COMPUTER MONITORS, TELEVISIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Many consumer electronic products contain heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and mercury as well as other materials that are better kept out of the environment. In fact, the typical cathode ray tube computer monitor (non-flat screen model) contains four to seven pounds of lead. Televisions, depending on their size, may contain even more lead.

The Covered Device Recycling Act

A state law was passed in November 2010, the Covered Device Recycling Act (Act 108 of 2010), or CDRA, which addresses the recycling and disposal of certain “covered” electronic devices in Pennsylvania. **“Covered Devices” include desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals, tablets, televisions and e-readers that have a browser and internet connectivity.**

The most notable impacts of the CDRA on Pennsylvania residents are the establishment of state-specific manufacturer collection and recycling programs for covered devices and a disposal ban.

Manufacturer Recycling Programs - Since Jan. 1, 2012, manufacturers of covered devices sold or offered for sale in Pennsylvania are required to make collection programs available to Pennsylvania residents for the recycling of their covered devices. Though not required, retailers may also offer collection programs. Both manufacturer and retailer collection programs for covered devices must be free of charge, unless a coupon, rebate or other financial incentive of equal or greater value is supplied.

Disposal Ban - Effective Jan. 24, 2013, landfills and other solid waste disposal facilities in Pennsylvania are no longer allowed to accept covered devices or their components. The CDRA requires that these devices be recycled. The disposal ban may affect the curbside collection of these items by municipal waste pickup programs, unless the program is specific to electronic materials.

Note - Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) programs that collect covered devices for one or more manufacturer-sponsored covered device recycling programs will not be eligible for reimbursement of program costs that are covered by manufacturers under the CDRA. Such costs shall include the program costs for the collection, transportation and recycling of any covered devices that one or more manufacturers has taken responsibility for in order to meet its obligated share. However, costs not mandated to be covered by manufacturers under the CDRA are still eligible for reimbursement under Act 190.

Cost for facilities and equipment will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In cases where the predominant costs of the operation are related to the recycling of covered devices, the costs for facilities and equipment will be prorated according to its use.

DEP urges citizens to know the facts to “reduce, reuse and recycle” these and other electronic devices, rather than discard them.

For instance, in the case of computers, DEP strongly recommends that residents:

- **Reduce** the need to purchase a replacement computer by buying one with ample capacity for upgrades, selecting one that offers a buy-back option, or leasing instead of buying.
- **Reuse** a computer, for example, by giving it as a gift for a student graduation or other occasion, by selling it or by donating it to a school or a nonprofit organization.
- **Recycle** a computer by taking it to a collection location that will send it to an electronics recycler.

Why can't electronic devices just be put out with the trash?

On Jan. 24, 2013, a landfill ban on desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals and televisions went into effect. DEP urges citizens to do their part for the environment by recycling or reusing as many electronic devices as possible in order to limit the number of those items and their hazardous components from entering the environment through landfills and other disposal activities.

If an electronic device that is not included in the ban must be discarded, DEP urges citizens to check with their municipality or county recycling coordinator to find out about local options for proper disposal. To find information on the local county recycling coordinator, visit DEP's website at www.dep.state.pa.us, Select 'Waste,' 'Recycling,' 'Public Resources,' and then 'County Recycling Coordinators,' or contact the Recycling Hotline at 800-346-4242.

Who would want a used computer? It's an old model and it doesn't have many programs.

Remember, "One person's junk is another person's treasure." A friend, children, a non-profit organization or a school might appreciate having an old computer, even if just for word processing.

Where can electronic devices be taken for recycling?

Many electronic items such as cell phones, computers and televisions can be recycled at local retailers that sell the items. The CDRA requires that retailers of computers, computer monitors and televisions provide customers with information on how and where to recycle these devices. Continue to recycle electronics at local municipal or county recycling events.

DEP maintains lists of various electronics recycling opportunities and collection locations on its website including county, municipal, non-profit and retailer and manufacturer sponsored collection programs. To view the current list, visit www.dep.state.pa.us and select 'Electronics Recycling' from the 'DEP Programs A - Z' menu.

Computers shouldn't end up in landfills. What can be done to help?

Encourage friends to join in upgrading their computers when possible or in having their old computers properly recycled. Become aware of those who could benefit from the donation of a computer. Ask the local municipality to consider sponsoring an annual or semi-annual collection of electronics if they do not already do so, or utilize municipal electronics collection events or permanent collection sites if they are already established.

DEP offers grants to municipalities of up to 50 percent of the developmental and operational costs associated with an electronics collection.

Where is there more information?

For more information on the CDRA, visit www.dep.state.pa.us (select 'Electronics Recycling' from the 'DEP Programs A - Z' menu), contact the **Recycling Hotline** at 800-346-4242 or contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Waste Management
Division of Waste Minimization and Planning
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8472
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8472
Telephone: 717-787-7382

For more information, visit www.dep.state.pa.us, keyword: Electronics Recycling.