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

Because of technological advances that have turned every household into an electronics haven, many people are asking how they can recycle or properly dispose of their old or unusable 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 new state law was passed in November of 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, and televisions.

The most notable impacts of the CDRA on Pennsylvania residents will be the establishment of commonwealth-specific manufacturer collection and recycling programs for covered devices and the upcoming disposal ban.

Manufacturer Recycling Programs - Beginning 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 are required to be free of charge, unless a coupon, rebate or other financial incentive of equal or greater value is supplied.

Disposal Ban - Beginning Jan. 24, 2013, landfills and other solid waste disposal facilities in Pennsylvania will no longer be allowed to accept covered devices or their components. The CDRA requires that these devices be recycled from that point forward. 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: Costs for permanent collection sites and one-day events sponsored by your county or local municipality will continue to be off-set by grants from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), if they are not part of a manufacturer program.)

Though these new recycling requirements for computers, monitors and televisions will not take effect until Jan. 1, 2012, DEP urges citizens to know the facts and take steps now 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 through the want-ads, 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 I just put my electronic devices out with the trash?

Prior to Jan. 24, 2013, DEP regulations do not prohibit households from setting electronic devices out with regular household trash; and even when the disposal ban goes into effect, it will apply only to desktop and laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals and televisions. However, DEP urges you to do your part for the environment by recycling or reusing as many of your 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 you must discard an electronic device, DEP urges you to check with your municipality or county recycling coordinator to find out about local options for proper disposal. To find information on your county recycling coordinator, visit DEP's website at www.depweb.state.pa.us. Select ‘Waste,’ ‘Recycling,’ ‘Public Resources,’ and then ‘County Recycling Coordinators,’ or contact the Recycling Hotline at 1-800-346-4242.

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

Remember, “One person’s junk is another person’s treasure.” Because of the advent of computers, most businesses and even high school students don't use typewriters anymore. A friend, your children, a non-profit organization or a school might appreciate having your old computer, even if just for word processing.

Where can I take my electronic devices for recycling?

Many electronic items such as cell phones, computers and televisions can be recycled at local retailers that sell the items. And, beginning Jan. 1, 2012, the CDRA requires that retailers of computers, computer monitors and televisions provide customers with information on how and where to recycle these devices. You can also continue to recycle your 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.depweb.state.pa.us and select ‘Electronics Recycling’ from the ‘DEP Programs A - Z’ menu.

I don’t want computers to end up in our landfills. What can I do to help?

Encourage your friends to join you in upgrading their computers when possible or in having their old computers properly recycled. Become aware of those around you who could benefit from the donation of a computer. Ask your municipality to consider sponsoring an annual or semi-annual collection of electronics if they do not already do so, or utilize your 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 can I get more information?

For more information on the CDRA, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us (select ‘Electronics Recycling’ from the ‘DEP Programs A - Z’ menu), contact the Recycling Hotline at 1-800-346-4242 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.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Electronics Recycling.
The Covered Device Recycling (Act 108) of 2010 (CDRA)
A General Overview

Electronic products constitute one of the fastest growing streams of today's consumer and commercial waste. In November 2010, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the CDRA, which establishes a number of requirements for individuals and entities involved throughout the life cycle of certain "covered" electronic devices. Covered devices include: desktop computers, laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals and televisions.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2012, most of the CDRA requirements go into effect.Outlined below, these requirements address the manufacture, sales, and end-of-life collection, management and recycling of covered devices in Pennsylvania.

➢ Manufacturers of covered devices offered for sale in Pennsylvania:
  o Must annually register their covered device brands with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and affix brand labels to their covered devices.
  o Must establish and conduct ongoing recycling programs that offer covered device collection opportunities at no cost to consumers.¹ The term "no cost" means no fee may be charged unless a financial incentive, such as a coupon or rebate, of equal or greater value is provided to the consumer. The devices collected through these programs must be properly recycled at certified electronics recycling facilities. The initial recycling plan must be approved by DEP by Jan. 1, 2012, and subsequently, Jan. 30 of each year thereafter.
  o Must report annual covered device collection and recycling data to DEP.

➢ Retailers that offer covered devices for sale in Pennsylvania:
  o May only sell covered devices that are labeled with a brand registered with DEP.
  o Must notify customers of how and where they can recycle their covered devices.
  o Are not required to offer covered device collection opportunities; but if they do, they must offer them to consumers at no cost. The term "no cost" means no fee may be charged unless a financial incentive, such as a coupon or rebate, of equal or greater value is provided. Any devices collected from consumers must be properly recycled at certified recycling facilities.

➢ Electronics Recycling Facilities:
  o Whether located in or outside of Pennsylvania, facilities that process or recycle covered devices that are collected from consumers through any electronics collection program in Pennsylvania, whether municipal, manufacturer, retailer, etc., must have achieved and maintained one of the following certifications:
    ▪ e-Stewards Certification.
    ▪ An internationally accredited third-party environmental management standard for the safe and responsible handling of covered devices.
  o Currently Pennsylvania’s Residual Waste Regulations require electronics processing/recycling facilities located in Pennsylvania to obtain a DEP general permit #WMGR081 (regarding the processing and beneficial use of electronic equipment and components by sorting, disassembling or mechanical processing) prior to processing any electronic devices or electronic waste.

➢ The Pennsylvania DEP:
  o Will post and maintain a list of registered and non-compliant covered device brands on its website for retailers and consumers to access.
  o Will also post on its website and make available via its toll-free recycling hotline (1-800-346-4242) an up-to-date list of all covered device collection opportunities offered to consumers, including those offered by manufacturers and retailers.

¹ The CDRA defines a consumer as "An occupant of a single detached dwelling unit or a single unit of a multiple dwelling unit who has used a covered device primarily for personal or small business use. For purposes of this definition, a small business is an entity that is independently owned or operated, employs 50 or fewer people, has purchased or leased a covered computer device from a computer manufacturer or retailer and, but for the program established under this act, would not otherwise have access to electronic recycling programs."
Will review manufacturers' covered device collection and recycling plans, and will oversee the implementation of all approved plans to ensure compliance with the CDRA.

Will encourage the use of existing covered device collection infrastructure to the extent that it is available to at least 85 percent of the commonwealth's population, is cost effective, and is environmentally sound.

Will organize and coordinate public education and outreach regarding the recycling of covered devices, including assisting retailers as necessary in the conduct of their public education and outreach efforts.

**Beginning Jan. 24, 2013, a disposal ban on covered devices goes into effect in Pennsylvania.** From this point forward, no person may dispose of a covered device, or any of its components, with their municipal solid waste. These devices and their components must be properly recycled and may not be taken to, nor accepted by, landfills or other solid waste disposal facilities for disposal. However, non-hazardous residuals of covered devices that are produced during the recycling of those devices are excluded from the disposal ban. The effects of the disposal ban are outlined below.

★ **Consumers:** The CDRA defines a consumer as "An occupant of a single detached dwelling unit or a single unit of a multiple dwelling unit who has used a covered device primarily for personal or small business use. For purposes of this definition, a small business is an entity that is independently owned or operated, employs 50 or fewer people, has purchased or leased a covered device from a computer manufacturer or retailer and, but for the program established under this act, would not otherwise have access to electronic recycling programs."

- May not dispose of their covered devices with municipal waste.
- Must take their covered devices to an electronics collection location for proper recycling, place their covered devices for curbside collection if a specific electronics collection program is offered or utilize an approved mail-back program to recycle their covered devices.

★ **Businesses:**

- May not dispose of their covered devices with municipal waste.
- Will need to recycle their covered devices. For businesses, the recycling facility that covered devices are transferred to does not need to be certified. If the facility is located in Pennsylvania, it must have a general permit #WMGR081 from DEP.

★ **Landfills and Resource Recovery Facilities:**

- May not accept covered devices or their components for disposal. However, they may accept non-hazardous residuals produced during the recycling of covered devices.
- Owners and operators of landfills will not be found in violation of the CDRA provided they make a good faith effort to comply with the Act; post, in a conspicuous location at the facility, a sign stating that covered devices and their components will not be accepted; and notify, in writing, all collectors registered to deposit solid waste to the facility that covered devices and their components will not be accepted at the facility.

★ **Haulers:**

- May not intentionally accept covered devices for disposal from any source of waste, and may not knowingly commingle covered devices with waste destined for disposal.
- Covered devices that are collected from consumers through electronics collection programs in Pennsylvania must continue to be transferred to certified electronics recycling facilities.

For more information on the CDRA, visit [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us) (select 'Electronics Recycling' from the 'DEP Programs A - Z' menu), or contact the Recycling Hotline at 1-800-346-4242, 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.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us), keyword: Electronics Recycling.