



## Disposal of Batteries\*

### Lead Acid Batteries (i.e. car batteries)

#### Issue

Lead acid batteries pose a potential threat to human health and the environment. The two main components of lead acid batteries are highly corrosive sulfuric acid ( $H_2SO_4$ ) and lead, which has been linked to central nervous system damage in humans and animals. KRS 224.5-410 thru 224.5-413 detail specific procedures for the lawful disposal of lead acid batteries.

#### What is Illegal Disposal?

Illegal or improper disposal of lead acid batteries includes:

- placing in garbage to be collected,
- taking lead acid batteries to a landfill, and
- incinerating.

#### What is the Proper Procedure for Disposal?

To properly dispose of lead acid batteries, deliver them to a:

- retailer of new lead acid batteries
- wholesaler of new lead acid batteries
- permitted secondary lead smelter
- facility that recycles the batteries by extracting the lead and chemical components
- collection center that will deliver the lead acid batteries to a smelter or recycling facility

#### Required Action by Retailer

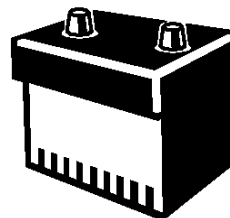
Retail sellers of new lead acid batteries must:

- accept one used lead acid battery for each new battery sold, and
- post a notice at the point of retail sale stating they are required to accept used lead acid batteries.

#### Required Action by Wholesaler

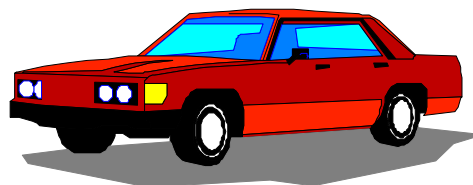
Wholesalers of new lead acid batteries must:

- accept used lead acid batteries of the same type and quantity from retailers, and
- remove used lead acid batteries from the retailer's business within 90 days of notification by the retailer that used batteries are to be picked up.



#### Information and Assistance:

Resource Conservation Section  
Division of Waste Management  
14 Reilly Road  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
(502) 564-6716



## **Household, Appliance and Toy Batteries**

Americans use two-billion disposable batteries a year in everything from clocks and watches to toys, cameras, flashlights and radios.

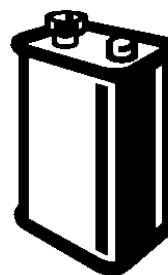
Batteries contain heavy metals and are thus a dangerous waste. About half of all the mercury and one-fourth of all the cadmium used in the United States goes into batteries.

Yet most batteries are thrown out with the trash and end up in landfills, where they may corrode, break apart and release those metals into the soil. Batteries that get incinerated with other trash release dangerous vapors into the air.

### **Some Simple Alternatives**

- Avoid products that operate on only batteries, like some toys.
- When a product uses either batteries or electricity, choose electricity as often as practical. The small amount of electricity used is less hazardous to the environment than the battery. Pollution created by producing electricity is highly regulated and managed

- Buy products with built-in recharger cells. Plug them into an electrical outlet to power up.
- Invest in rechargeable batteries and a recharger to handle most of the rest of your battery needs. Rechargeables aren't appropriate for some uses, and they are somewhat more expensive than single-use batteries. However, just a few changes of regular batteries will pay for your investment. Rechargeables still contain cadmium, but they create less waste because they can be reused up to 1,000 times if used properly.



\* Adapted from:

- a.) *Facts About Lead Acid Batteries*, by Charles Peters and Steven Brigandi of the Resource Conservation Section, Division of Waste Management, Frankfort, Kentucky; and
- b.) *Facts About Batteries*, by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana Recycling Coalition.

Adapted by: Mike Klahr, Boone County Extension Agent for Horticulture.