

Hazardous waste in the home

We use batteries all the time and if you're like most, dead batteries don't cross your mind as a hazardous waste. A kitchen trashcan is no place for electrochemical devices, especially with kids or pets around.

Not all batteries are the same and some are safer to toss in the trash than others, even though it's not recommended. Here are a few examples of different batteries and ways to safely dispose of them.

Your car, children's toy car, digital camera and laptop batteries

All of these products use lead acid batteries. The sulfuric acid in lead acid batteries is highly corrosive and potentially more harmful than other batteries.

It's against the law to simply throw away lead acid batteries, but they are easy to recycle. If you're in Missouri or Kansas, any retailer that sells lead acid batteries (auto service centers) have to recycle used batteries. You can recycle lead acid batteries at your local household hazardous waste facility. Or you can go to Call2Recycle and have them recycle your dead batteries.

Flashlight, watch, TV remote and small toy batteries

These are single-use batteries and are not classified as household hazardous waste, so they are safe to throw away in the trash. Not all communities in Kansas City participate in the Household Hazardous Waste program. If you live in Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson or Miami county and you're concerned about dead batteries getting into the wrong hands, check out recyclespot.org to find your nearest recycle spot.

For more information, visit RecycleSpot.org or call (816) 474-8326.

Reduce battery waste

In addition to recycling, you can take the following steps to reduce battery waste:

- Don't over-buy batteries – check to see if you already have the batteries you need before buying more.
- Keep all your new batteries in one place.
- Try to purchase electronics that can work without batteries.
- Consider rechargeable batteries, which have a longer life span.

For more information on how to dispose of household hazardous wastes, visit RecycleSpot.org or call (816) 474-8326.

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Did you know your energy efficient light bulbs (the 'squiggly' bulbs) contain mercury? That's definitely not something you want in the bottom of your kitchen trashcan, but not many people know what do you do when their bulbs burn out.

Here are some helpful tips for how you can safely dispose or recycle different types of light bulbs. For more information on how to dispose of household hazardous wastes, visit RecycleSpot.org or call (816) 474-8326.

Fluorescent bulbs

These include fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent lights, otherwise known as energy efficient light bulbs or the 'squiggly' bulbs. Because of the mercury they contain, it is recommended that you recycle them for the safety of your family and environment. They can be recycled through local household hazardous waste programs and at Batteries Plus. Your energy efficient light bulbs can be recycled at Home Depot, Lowe's and other hardware stores. For more information on how to dispose of household hazardous wastes, visit RecycleSpot.org or call (816) 474-8326.

Incandescent, halogen and LED bulbs

These bulbs can be thrown away in the trash – there are no options to recycle incandescent, halogen or LED light bulbs in the Kansas City area. To keep them from shattering, put them in their original packaging or in a plastic bag before throwing away. For more information on how to dispose of household hazardous wastes, visit RecycleSpot.org or call (816) 474-8326.

Safe cleanup

The hazardous component of fluorescent light bulbs is the small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. When a fluorescent bulb breaks, some of this mercury is released as mercury vapor. Keep yourself and sanitation workers safe by following proper cleanup procedures. For more information on how to dispose of household hazardous wastes, visit RecycleSpot.org or call (816) 474-8326.