Proper Disposal of Universal and Electronic Wastes

SafetyNet #: 122

Effective February 8, 2006 state law prohibits the disposal of waste household batteries, electronic devices, and fluorescent light bulbs in regular municipal trash. These items, called universal wastes, contain harmful chemicals, which, if put in the trash may harm people or the environment. UC Davis has been on the forefront of diverting these materials from municipal trash and has many programs in place to assist the campus community. This SafetyNet will help you understand the resources available to help you comply with universal waste regulations.

Common Batteries – These include AA, AAA, C cells, D cells and button batteries (e.g. hearing aid batteries). These may contain a corrosive chemical that can cause burns as well as toxic heavy metals like cadmium. Battery recycling bins are located at the following locations on campus:

- MU-Coffee House (By the sliding door entrance)
- ARC entrance
- Shields Library Copy Room
- Communication Resources
- Carlson Health Sciences Library
- Silo
- Segundo LRC
- Tercero Housing
- Physics/Geology Building
- Plant and Environmental Science Building
- Primate Center

For outlying areas, please use the WASTE application [1] to request to have your batteries removed. Automotive, motorcycle, and Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) type batteries are not universal waste and are managed as hazardous waste. See SafetyNet #8 [2] for additional information.

Fluorescent Tubes and Bulbs and Other Mercury-Containing Lamps – Fluorescent light tubes and bulbs, high intensity discharge (HID), metal halide, sodium, and neon bulbs. These lights contain mercury vapor that may be released to the environment when they are broken. Call the Operations & Maintenance work order desk at (530) 752-1655 to request pick-up of
spent, intact bulbs and light tubes. For disposal of broken bulbs or tubes, please use the WASTe application [1].

**Large Appliances and Equipment** – These may contain thermostats, electrical switches, relays or sensors that may contain mercury, pumps that contain oil or compressors that contain refrigerants. State law requires that a Certified Appliance Recycler must remove and properly manage these materials from discarded appliances and equipment before they are sent off site for metal recycling. Please review SafetyNet #113 regarding Release of Equipment before emailing Aggie Surplus at aggiesurplus@ucdavis.edu [3] to place a pick up request to have these items removed.

**Electronic Devices** – Many electronic devices containing circuit boards including: tube-type and flat panel televisions and computer monitors, laptop computers, computers (CPUs), printers, radios, microwave ovens, VCRs, cell phones, cordless phones, PDA’s, and telephone answering machines have been tested and found to contained concentrations of heavy metals like lead, cadmium, copper, and chromium high enough to make them hazardous wastes when they are discarded. Unless you are sure they are not hazardous, you should presume these types of devices need to be recycled or disposed of as hazardous waste and that they may not be thrown in the trash. Small hand-held devices such as cell phones and PDAs can be deposited in one of the recycling multi-bins located on campus. Larger items must be disposed through Aggie Surplus at aggiesurplus@ucdavis.edu [3].

**Aerosol Cans** – These may be universal wastes. Please use the EH&S hazardous waste pick up request system to have these items removed. See SafetyNet #8 [2] for additional information.

**Contact**

**Hazardous Waste Management**

hazwaste@ucdavis.edu 530-754-5058  
FAX: 530-752-4527

**More information**


**Related content**

1. Chemical Waste Disposal Guidelines
2. WASTe

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