

New Rules for Recycling Batteries

The Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority is no longer accepting use-once alkaline batteries or rechargeable batteries for recycling.

Changes in federal regulations combined with less hazardous battery components mean the typical household AAA, AA, C, D and 9-volt batteries now fall below federal and state hazardous waste standards and should be thrown out in the ordinary trash, said Larry Gindoff, solid waste coordinator for the MCMUA.

"Energizer, Duracell and other manufacturers have eliminated mercury content to the point that the typical use-once household battery is no longer considered hazardous," Gindoff said.

However, rechargeable batteries like those found in cordless power tools, digital cameras and cellular phones still must be recycled by bringing them to any one of a number of rechargeable battery drop-off locations across the county under a program called Call2Recycle.

"This program is operated by the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation at no cost to the individual," Gindoff said. "The rechargeable battery recycling locations are provided with a drop-off box with small plastic bags so the batteries can be individually bagged in accordance with new federal guidelines."

Among the drop-off locations for rechargeable batteries are Home Depot, Lowes, Best Buy, Radio Shack and Verizon Wireless stores. Collection sites may be found by calling 1-877-2-RECYCLE or by visiting www.call2recycle.org

Since rechargeable batteries sometimes look like regular alkaline batteries, Gindoff advises reading the label on the battery to determine if it is rechargeable.

Other batteries such as button cell batteries, non-rechargeable lithium batteries and lead-acid batteries like those used in motor vehicles and boats must still be taken to household hazardous waste disposal programs, Gindoff said. Information about Morris County's household hazardous waste programs can be found on the MCMUA Web site, www.mcmua.com, or by calling 973-829-8006.