

Date: Apr 18, 2010; Section: Earth Day Preview; Page: 2B

# Just don't throw away your old TV, cell phones, computers

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When that old personal computer or television meets its inevitable end, it can't just go out in the trash bin.

Before you dispose of your electronics, be sure you know how to do so properly. Electronic items contain hazardous materials such as lead, mercury and cadmium, so tossing them in the trash isn't a wise option. Instead, most experts suggest recycling them.

"The concern with electronics is that they contain some really toxic stuff," said Nathan Rich, executive director of Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District in Davis County.

"It's a concern when you think about heaving heavy metals and lead into the environment, plus there's not a lot of room."

Rich said recycling is the best way to get rid of TVs, VCRs, computers and CD players as well as items such as metals, plastics and glass.

"These items fall under the household hazardous waste category, and we accept them at our landfill at no cost. There are some other places that will take business electronics, like Stone Castle Recycling or Metech Recycling at Freeport Center.

They disassemble everything and break them into components. Hard drives are usually shredded and destroyed," Rich said.

Nicole Turner, environmental health scientist at the Weber-Morgan Health Department, said the Weber County Solid Waste Transfer Station will accept loads of electronic waste from households.

The charge is \$5 for the first 320 pounds and is prorated for larger quantities.

"Many electronic items include compounds such as lead, mercury, cadmium and brominated flame retardants that could potentially leach into the water if disposed of in landfills or into the air if incinerated," Turner said. "For example, a 15-inch cathode ray tube monitor contains over 1.5 pounds of lead and a television with CRTs contains approximately four to seven pounds of lead."

He says e-waste is the fastest growing waste stream.

"It's estimated that 400 million units will be disposed of in 2010 and less than 25 percent will be recycled," she said. "Fourteen (million) to 20 million computers are retired in the United States each year and up to 15 percent of them will be disposed of in landfills."

Sam Schroyer, environmental scientist at the state Department of Environmental Quality, said Rep. Rebecca Edwards, R-North Salt Lake, submitted a bill in the last legislative session that would have required a recycling program for all electronics.

"It's going on right now. There have been a lot of meetings about it and it's supposed to be in the final draft stages," he said. "It's really best to keep electronics out of the landfills. A lot of stores will even take your cell phone back and recycle it. The phones will go to women in shelters or to other countries to be used."

Several Web sites also offer tips on recycling e-waste.

Two are [www.electronicrecycling.org](http://www.electronicrecycling.org) and [www.ecyclingcentral.com](http://www.ecyclingcentral.com).



Standard-Examiner file photo

Stone Castle Recycling in Ogden accepts electronic waste.