

Computer and Electronics Recycling: Need and Benefits

EPA on eCycling <http://www.epa.gov/osw/consERVE/materials/ecycling/faq.htm>

The environmental impact of disposing electronics into the environment without any precaution?

Electronics are complex devices which are made of a wide variety of material constituents. Some of the constituents, such as lead, nickel, cadmium, and mercury, could pose risks to human health or the environment if mismanaged at their end-of-life. EPA is very concerned about ensuring the proper management of used electronics and has undertaken important work to increase the collection and responsible recycling of used electronics.

What are the environmental benefits of reusing and recycling e-waste?

Electronic products are made from valuable resources and highly engineered materials, including metals, plastics, and glass, all of which require energy to mine and manufacture them. Reusing and recycling consumer electronics conserves our natural resources and avoids air and water pollution, as well as greenhouse gas emissions that are caused by manufacturing virgin materials.

The EPA strongly supports keeping used electronics out of landfills, to recover materials and reduce the environmental impacts and energy demands from mining and manufacturing. Electronics are made from valuable resources, such as precious metals, copper, and engineered plastics, all of which require considerable energy to process and manufacture. Recycling electronics recovers valuable materials and as a result, we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollution, save energy, and save resources by extracting fewer raw materials from the earth.

For example:

- Recycling one million laptops saves the energy equivalent to the electricity used by 3,657 US homes in a year.
- One metric ton of circuit boards can contain 40 to 800 times the amount of gold and 30 to 40 times the amount of copper mined from one metric ton of ore in the US.

How much e-waste is recycled?

A great deal of what is labeled as “e-waste” is actually not waste at all; rather, it is whole electronic equipment or parts that are readily marketable for reuse or can be recycled for materials recovery. In 2009, approximately 25 percent of TVs, computer products, and cell phones that were ready for end-of-life management were collected for recycling. Cell phones were recycled at a rate of approximately 8 percent.

Teddy's Partners: www.TeddysEagleProject.org

1. PC Rebuilders and Recycling: www.pcr.com for accepting and recycling the computers
2. Genesis Electronics Recycling, Inc.: www.genesisrecycling.net for accepting electronic items
3. Trinity Methodist Church: www.trinitywilmette.com for the use of their parking lot