



If you use or store your household chemicals improperly, they could end up in the wrong package.

## Batteries

Batteries come in a multitude of sizes, shapes, and chemistries, from the small zinc air batteries used in hearing aids to the twenty-pound lead-acid battery in your car. Many of these contain heavy metals such as lead and cadmium. When disposed of in a landfill the heavy metals may slowly leach into soil, ground water, and surface water. If they are incinerated the heavy metals may escape in smokestack emissions or leach out of the ash. Although safe when used properly, if they are disposed of improperly, exposure to heavy metals can cause serious health effects including cancer.

### Alkaline and zinc-carbon

Alkaline and zinc carbon are non-rechargeable batteries that are typically used in flashlights, radios, toys, smoke detectors and many other products in your home. Although these used to contain mercury, those made after July, 1996 have a very small amount of mercury and are no longer considered hazardous. These may be disposed of in the trash. If you have one that was made prior to 1996 it should be brought to a Regional Collection Center or saved for a Toxic Cleanup Day. To locate a Regional Collection Center near you please visit our web site at [www.safesmartsolutions.org](http://www.safesmartsolutions.org).

## Rechargeable Batteries

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Rechargeable batteries are used in a growing number of electronics, cordless power tools, cell phones, etc. These include nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) lithium-ion (Li-ion), nickel metal hydride, (Ni-MH), and small sealed lead acid (SSLA) batteries. Eventually the battery will no longer hold a charge and will need to be replaced. The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC) has formed a network of locations that will accept rechargeable batteries for recycling. For a list of collection sites, visit the RBRC web site at [www.rbrc.org](http://www.rbrc.org), or call them at 1-800-8-battery.

## Button Cell

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Button batteries are the small batteries commonly found in hearing aids, watches, toys, and calculators. Button cell mercuric oxide batteries can no longer be sold in the United States and have been replaced with zinc-air and silver-oxide button cells. Although zinc-air and silver-oxide batteries have a much lower amount of mercury, they still should be brought to a Regional Collection Center or Toxic Cleanup Day. If you do have a mercuric-oxide battery, bring it to a Regional Collection Center or save it for a Toxic Cleanup Day.

## Lead-Acid Batteries

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Lead-acid batteries contain an average of 17.5 pounds of lead and 1.5 gallons of sulfuric acid. Improperly disposed lead-acid batteries can corrode and release lead and sulfuric acid. The lead and sulfuric acid seep into the ground and contaminate the soil and the ground water. Leaking lead-acid batteries disposed in household trash also pose a danger to refuse collectors.

State law has prohibited land disposal of lead-acid batteries since 1990. Retailers are required to accept a used battery in exchange when a new one is purchased. For a list of retailers who are willing to accept lead-acid batteries even when one is not purchased please visit our web site at [www.safesmartssolution.org](http://www.safesmartssolution.org).

## A few things to remember:

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- ▶ Remove the batteries before disposing of a product.
- ▶ Buy batteries only as you need them as they do have a limited shelf life.
- ▶ Don't mix old batteries with new ones or rechargeable ones with disposable batteries.
- ▶ Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible and recycle them when they can no longer hold a charge.

For more information please visit our web site at [www.safesmartssolutions.org](http://www.safesmartssolutions.org)



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