



Cell Phone Recycling

Even though they are considerably smaller than computers and televisions, cell phones should not be just thrown out as trash. Cell phones can contain lead, mercury, beryllium, arsenic and cadmium – all potentially hazardous materials that could pollute the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 100 million cell phones are no longer used each year. If all the unused cell phones were recycled, the energy saved could power 194,000 U.S. homes for a year.

There are two better alternatives to disposing of unused cell phones and accompanying accessories, like chargers and headsets: recycling or donating.

Recycling

There are many different materials within a cell phone. Some of these materials are precious metals, copper and plastic. These components have value and would be wasted if dumped in a landfill.

A large number of cell phone related businesses, including retailers and manufacturers, collect cell phones for recycling. The next time you visit one of these businesses, look for their collection box or ask about their program.

Donating

Even though you no longer need your old a cell phone, it does not mean the phone is completely useless. There are many non-profit organizations and charities that accept cell phones and distribute them to those in need. The phones that cannot be reused are recycled and the recycling revenue benefits the charity.

What You Can Do

Here are a few steps that should be taken before sending a phone on to its second life:

- Terminate your service to the phone.
- Clear the phone's memory of stored information.
- Remove the SIM card, which is usually located behind the battery.
- Recycle or donate your cell phone.

For more information

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Hazardous Waste Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
800-361-4827 or 573-751-3176
www.dnr.mo.gov/env/hwp/index.html
hazwaste@dnr.mo.gov

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Solid Waste Management Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
800-361-4827 or 573-751-5401
www.dnr.mo.gov/env/swmp/index.html
swmp@dnr.mo.gov