
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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WMD-SW-4

1999

Management of Used Motor Vehicle Batteries

The Problem

An estimated 400,000 used motor vehicle batteries are discarded in New Hampshire each year. These include the lead acid batteries used in cars, trucks, motorcycles and recreational vehicles. An average motor vehicle battery contains sulfuric acid and 18 to 20 pounds of lead.



Landfilling and incineration of these batteries could pose a serious threat to your health and the environment because of the lead they contain. Lead, a toxic heavy metal, may leach from batteries disposed of in unlined landfills and contaminate ground water and surface water. If incinerated in a municipal solid waste incinerator, volatilized lead from batteries may be released via flue gases and also remain in the resultant bottom ash. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 65% of the lead in the municipal waste stream originates from improperly disposed lead acid batteries.

Health Effects

Pregnant woman and children are the most susceptible to lead exposure. Lead can affect a child's growing body by causing harm to the nervous system as well as causing learning and behavior problems. Exposure to lead is also a concern with adults in higher concentrations. Health effects from lead include fatigue, stomach problems, headaches and depression. Chronic exposure to higher levels of lead may cause anemia and permanent kidney or brain damage. Sulfuric acid is also a safety concern since it is corrosive and can burn skin and eyes.

The Solution

Since January 1, 1991, New Hampshire law has prohibited the disposal of lead acid batteries in solid waste landfills or incinerators in the State. The law (NH RSA 149-M:27, II) encourages lead acid batteries to be recycled and the recovered lead to be used in the manufacture of new batteries.

Under NH RSA 261:153 V and NH RSA 149-M:18, New Hampshire communities may choose to institute a "Vehicle Registration Fee" to be used for the collection and management of resident vehicle wastes, such as used lead acid batteries, used motor oil and discarded tires.

Disposal Options

In NH, most places that sell you car batteries will take them back; your best option is to simply trade in your old battery when you buy a new one.

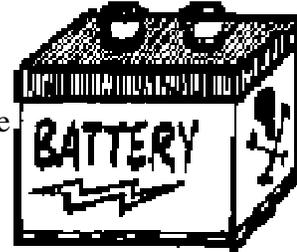
NH also has recyclers who will take the motor vehicle batteries from you; look in your yellow pages or contact the NHDES for more information.

As a service to households, some communities may have battery collections at their transfer stations or collect them at household hazardous waste collection events. Call your local town office or NHDES for details.

Hazardous Waste Requirements Which Apply to Spent Lead Acid Batteries Being Reclaimed

Generators and collectors must store these batteries so the battery housing will not break and release the acid onto the soil or ground and surface waters. (Env-Wm 809.02)

Transporters of spent lead acid batteries being reclaimed must ensure the batteries are loaded and braced to prevent short circuits and damage to the battery during shipment and must comply with DOT requirements. (Env-Wm 809.03)



Reclamation facilities for these batteries must also comply with the regulatory requirements of Env-Wm 809.04.

Additional Information

For more information regarding the regulations that apply to reclamation facilities, transporters and generators can call the Hazardous Waste Assistance Hotline at (603) 271-2942.

For more information regarding the management of lead acid batteries and/or which NH communities and businesses accept them for recycling, please contact:

NH Department of Environmental Services
Waste Management Division
29 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03301-6509
Telephone: 603 271-2900
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964
E-mail: hhw@des.state.nh.us
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