

Reasons for Universal Waste Regulations

Part of the reason for removing universal waste from the regular garbage is to reduce the potential exposure and environmental release of two poisonous metals, mercury and lead. The majority of universal waste items contain one of these metals.



Both mercury and lead are naturally occurring metals that are toxic to humans and animals. Exposure can come from contaminated food and water as well as inhalation of mercury vapor or lead particles in the air. The World Health Organization considers mercury and lead to be two of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern.

Mercury

Mercury can have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems. It can also have toxic effects on the lungs, kidneys, skin, and eyes.

Lead

Lead affects humans of all ages but the effects are most serious in young children. In children lead poisoning can inhibit brain and nervous system development. When pregnant women are exposed to high levels the results are miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and minor malformations in the baby.

Lead is distributed to the brain, liver, kidneys and bones when it enters our bodies and can affect the function of most of our organs.

Please do not throw your universal waste in the trash!

universal waste disposal at Eastern is managed by EH&S. Contact EH&S if you have questions or concerns about universal waste management.

The Waste Transfer Facility (Hazardous Waste Storage on the map below) is managed by EH&S. It is located near Central Stores.



If you are in a residence hall, contact your Area or Residential Life Coordinator, or EH&S, for locations to place universal waste.

Environmental Health & Safety

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RECYCLING UNIVERSAL WASTE



Environmental Health & Safety



EASTERN
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Universal Waste

Universal waste is common household waste that contain hazardous components.

Universal waste can be generated by both businesses and households. It is usually generated in relatively small quantities and is less harmful than waste that is designated as Hazardous Waste.

Universal waste was previously disposed of with normal household trash. New laws have been established to remove universal waste from landfills by either recycling it or using special disposal methods.



Universal waste is comprised of many common items such as:

- Aerosol cans
- Batteries
- Electronics
- Household Appliances
- Lightbulbs

This handout will describe what types of waste are considered universal waste and how to safely dispose of universal waste at Eastern Washington University.

Types of Universal Waste

Aerosol Cans & Small Gas Cylinders

Aerosol cans and small gas cylinders are pressurized and, in most cases, contain flammable components. A few buildings on campus contain collection barrels. The cans and cylinders can also be dropped off at the Waste Transfer Facility (see back page).

Batteries

Most household batteries are considered universal waste and all batteries are recycled at Eastern. Look for battery recycling bins next to the paper recycling. If the battery recycling bin near you is full, contact Transportation Services (x4835) so it can be replaced.

Electronics

Many consumer electronic devices are considered universal waste. These devices often contain heavy metals, including lead. Electronic devices that are considered universal waste include:

- Cell phones and other phones
- Computers
- Computer and TV monitors including LCD and plasma screens
- Radios
- Video game consoles

Cell phones can frequently be recycled for money or donated to charities. There is a box for recycling on the mezzanine level of the PUB which will donate phones to victims of domestic violence.

All electronics can be sent to Surplus Sales for redistribution or recycling. Call x7377 or email surplus@ewu.edu.

Household Appliances

Household appliances can contain a number of toxic substances including mercury and lead. Proper disposal is important to keep these toxic substances out of the landfill and prevent their release into the environment.

Household appliances include:

- Air conditioning units
- Dehumidifiers
- Microwaves
- Refrigerators and freezers
- Space heaters
- Stoves and ovens

Contact Transportation Services for disposal of household appliances. Call x4835 or email kbuck1@ewu.edu.

Lights

Fluorescent lights may contain mercury vapor. These lights should be handled carefully to prevent them from breaking (and releasing mercury into the room and environment). They must be recycled when they burn out.

Lights can be dropped off in the shed next to the Waste Transfer Facility. Call EH&S if you require assistance with these products.

Mercury Containing Thermometers, Thermostats and Gauges

Contact EH&S for disposal of mercury containing items. Place **unbroken** items in a bucket for EH&S to collect, or take the bucket to the Waste Transfer Facility.

Contact EH&S (x6496) immediately for broken or leaking mercury containing items.