

Where Can I Recycle Old Batteries?

If you're like me then you have a plastic bag or tub full of old single-use batteries that have long since lost their usability. Normally, I'd consider a bag full of unusable items trash and discard them accordingly, but in this case, it just doesn't feel right because I know they'll be dumped in a landfill, left there over time to deteriorate. Ultimately, their contents will mix with the groundwater. So the question is: *Why aren't they recyclable like plastic bottles or cardboard?* First, let's look at what single-use batteries are made of.

[Alkaline batteries](#), also known as non-rechargeable batteries or primary batteries, are commonly used around the home, office, clinics, and other places. Before 1996, these batteries also contained mercury, which we all know is a highly toxic substance. After the [Mercury-Containing and Rechargeable Battery Management Act \("Battery Act"\)](#) was passed, this was no longer a problem. The EPA has since classified modern-day alkaline batteries as non-toxic or non-hazardous because they do not contain mercury. I'm just not sure I agree with this.

Think about a glass of drinking water that you've just poured for yourself or a loved one. Now, find an old battery; one that's so old in fact that its contents corroded through the metal jacket and foamed over into a crystalized acidic substance that isn't quite identifiable. Now, drop the said battery into your glass of water and drink up. Not so appetizing, right? ~~Yeah, not only is that thought disgusting, but I'm pretty sure it would be death in a glass.~~

So, if recycling batteries is such a big deal, then why don't we recycle single-use batteries? Well, I did some research, and it's not that easy. After checking numerous places in the Township, I noticed a pattern. Most of the businesses that I assumed would recycle the batteries told me that it's too expensive. This was disappointing enough to inspire the [Environmental Advisory Committee](#) to recommend a small change to help prevent these harmful materials from getting into our landfills and doing further damage to our environment.

If you'd like to know more then send us an [email](#) or if you have a bag of old batteries lying around as I do, then stop by the Township building lobby or the Community Recreation Center during operating hours. Look for the plastic cylinder where you can toss those old batteries so they can be recycled safely.

**Ryan Rex, Chair of the Montgomery Township
EAC**



Recycling container by [Battery Solutions](#)