Dispose of Household Batteries the Right Way

Spring is the season of renewal, spring cleaning, and fresh starts. As you upgrade tools, toys, and electronics for outdoor fun and home improvement projects, remember that many of these items are powered by household batteries such as AAA, AA, C, D, button cell, 9-volt, and rechargeable batteries. While it is easy to toss old batteries in the trash, doing so can be dangerous. Batteries contain metals and chemicals that make them hazardous waste, which are harmful to both people and the environment if not disposed of properly.

It is illegal to dispose of hazardous waste in the trash, down storm drains, on the ground, or into your regular recycling bin. When batteries come into contact with metal objects or other conductive materials, they can short-circuit, generate heat, and even ignite, causing fires in trash cans and garbage trucks. Fire safety organizations and waste management authorities report that improperly discarded batteries are responsible for a significant number of dumpster fires each year. These fires not only endanger property but also pose serious risks to public safety.

Residents can make a big difference by choosing rechargeable batteries whenever possible. They last longer, save money over time, and reduce waste. Rechargeable batteries are also made with more recyclable materials, making them more eco-friendly to process once they reach the end of their life.

When batteries no longer hold a charge, store them safely in an insulated container until they can be recycled appropriately. Taking a few simple steps to dispose of batteries responsibly helps reduce the risk of fires, protect public safety, and prevent toxic materials from entering landfills.

Los Angeles County residents can safely dispose of household batteries at participating libraries, temporary Countywide Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste (HHW/E-Waste) collection events, permanent collection centers, or City of Los Angeles S.A.F.E. centers.

To find a disposal site near you, visit https://cleanla.lacounty.gov/ or call (888) CLEAN-LA.