



# Help reduce the risk of fires

Batteries and other ignitable materials can start fires inside curbside bins, in collection trucks, and at recycling facilities. Lithium-ion batteries, found in many rechargeable devices like cell phones, laptops, and headphones, are the most common cause of fires.

Lithium-ion batteries can easily ignite when damaged, and in the process of collecting and processing curbside trash, they are likely to be mangled. Mechanized trucks typically crush waste when picking it up. At materials recovery facilities (MRFs), items travel across conveyors and tumble through a series of sorting machines. At landfills, waste is compacted by heavy equipment. The fires sparked by lithium-ion batteries not only cause damage to vehicles or facilities, but they also result in injuries to firefighters, monetary loss, and service disruptions in the community. In addition, when we trash our portable devices and their batteries, we cannot reuse the beneficial and often rare materials they contain in new products.

We can all do our part to ensure we properly dispose of these batteries to keep our community safe. You can take taped batteries to the Allen County Department of Environmental Management partner stores, Do-it Best Hardwares and Batteries Plus, and to the Household Hazardous Waste facility, located at 2260 Carroll Road, on Tox-Tuesday or Tox-Saturday.

**This lithium-ion battery pack was most likely to blame for a fire in a trash collection truck that required the load to be emptied onto a street so the fire could be put out.**

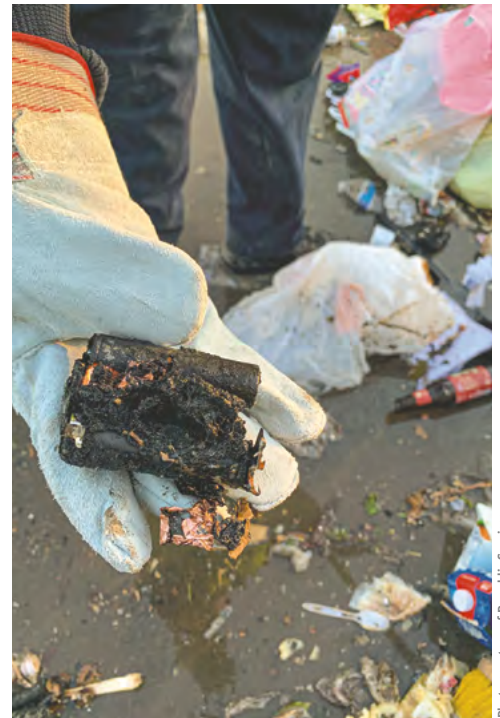


Photo courtesy of Republic Services



## Mark Your Calendar for Tox-Saturday

In addition to Tox-Tuesdays, the City of Fort Wayne partners with the Allen County Department of Environmental Management to provide special Saturday drop-off opportunities. The first Tox-Saturday for 2024 will be held on April 20, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fees do apply. For details about materials accepted and costs, visit [www.acwastewatcher.org](http://www.acwastewatcher.org).

# Safe Disposal of Lithium-Ion Batteries

To keep your family and home safe, it is important to know how to properly dispose of lithium batteries. These batteries can swell, catch fire, and even explode.

Lithium and lithium-ion batteries can be found in rechargeable tools, cell phones, electronic devices, laptops, vapes, and more. Lithium batteries are at a greater risk for fires than alkaline batteries. Swollen or defective lithium batteries are also at an increased fire risk. Here are some tips for safely handling lithium batteries:

## Use

- Replace damaged batteries.
- Avoid high-temperature areas.
- Use only the original or a UL-rated cord when charging devices.
- Unplug cables once maximum charge is reached.

## Storage

- Store batteries and devices containing them in cool, dry places.
- Avoid storing multiple lithium batteries together, especially loose.

## Disposal

- Tape each battery end.
- Drop them off between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Tox-Tuesdays at 2260 Carroll Road.
- Do not dispose of any batteries in the trash or the recycling cart.

To learn more about lithium battery safety, visit [www.acwastewatcher.org](http://www.acwastewatcher.org).

*Article and information courtesy of the Allen County Department of Environmental Management*



## What Do I Do...?

### If the battery is swollen or hot to the touch:

- Keep the battery in a safe, cool storage area away from other flammable materials until the next Tox-Tuesday.
- Deliver swollen batteries to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility, located at 2260 Carroll Road, on Tox-Tuesday.

### If the battery is on fire:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Get the battery outdoors.



ALLEN COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENVIRONMENTAL  
MANAGEMENT**

# Tips for Great Recycling

- **Label Bins Clearly** – Inside your home, label your recycling bins clearly to remind everyone what can and cannot be recycled. Simple, visible labels can make a big difference.
- **Empty, Clean, and Dry** – Empty bottles and other containers, remove excess residue, rinse them out, and allow them to air-dry.
- **Save Space in the Cart** – Break down and flatten boxes before recycling. If needed, cut cardboard into pieces no larger than about 18 by 18 inches.
- **Keep It Loose** – Don't bag your recycling. Recyclables should be loose as they go into the cart.
- **Avoid Hazardous Materials** – Never mix tangles, like hoses or cords, or hazardous waste, such as batteries, chemicals, or medical sharps, with your recycling. These items can endanger workers and damage equipment.
- **Steer Clear of Contaminants** – Keep “yucky” items out of the recycling cart! This includes dirty recyclables, greasy pizza boxes, and, especially, diapers.
- **Learn More** – For more tips about recycling, visit [www.RecycleFortWayne.org](http://www.RecycleFortWayne.org).

# Recycling Reminders

 **Only Place These Items in the Recycle Cart:**



Glass Bottles & Jars



Plastic Bottles, Jugs, and Containers



Metal Cans, Aluminum Foil, and Aluminum Pie Pans



Cardboard, Newspaper, Magazines, and Other Paper



Food Cartons and Boxes

 **Prepare Your Recyclables Properly:**



Empty and rinse all food and beverage bottles, jars, and containers. Allow them to dry.



Break down and flatten boxes.



Do NOT bag your recycling.

 **Never Place These Items in the Recycle Cart:**



Plastic Bags and Wrappers



Clothing and Shoes



Greasy Pizza Boxes and Paper Towels



Electronics and Batteries



Construction Debris



Medical Waste and Medications



Yard Waste



Diapers, Wipes, and Tissues



Tools



Food



Toys



Tanglers (hoses, cords, etc.)



# Large Items to Discard?

## Contact us to schedule a pickup!

Do you have large items to dispose of that won't fit into your garbage cart? If so, the City of Fort Wayne Solid Waste Department does provide bulk trash pickup for residents. **However, you must schedule this service at least two business days prior to your regular garbage day.** We will accept up to three bulky items per pickup appointment.

To schedule a bulk trash pickup, you may use the online service request form by clicking on "Contact 311" in the menu bar at [www.cityoffortwayne.org](http://www.cityoffortwayne.org). Simply choose "Solid Waste" then the "Bulk Trash Pickup" option. If you prefer, you may call 311 to schedule this service.

These items are accepted during bulk trash pickups:

- Furniture
- Mattresses/bed springs (These items must be completely wrapped in plastic. Plastic mattress bags are available at hardware and home improvement stores, as well as online.)
- Non-refrigerant appliances, such as washers, dryers, stoves, and dishwashers

These items will not be accepted during a bulk trash pickup. Visit [www.acwastewatcher.org](http://www.acwastewatcher.org) for disposal options.

- NO tires, batteries, or concrete
- NO appliances that contain refrigerants (Freon), such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, water coolers, and dehumidifiers
- NO remodeling debris



Credit: LongHa2006 | iStock | Getty Images Plus

If possible, residents should place bulk items at least 3 feet away from their garbage cart so that the garbage truck arm doesn't get caught on bulk trash.



Credit: huyume | iStock | Getty Images Plus

## Recycling Your Electronics

In the era of rapid technological advancement, we are surrounded by an ever-growing collection of electronic gadgets, each promising to make our lives easier and more connected. While these digital devices and the access they provide redefine our world, they also leave behind a staggering, often overlooked problem — electronic waste, or e-waste.

Thankfully, we have ways for you to safely and properly get rid of older electronic items. Selling or donating items that are still useful is a great way to avoid e-waste. You can also drop off unwanted electronics (e-waste) at any of our verified electronics recycling locations in Allen County. For a full list of those facilities, visit [www.acwastewatcher.org](http://www.acwastewatcher.org).



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