



# E-Cycle Wisconsin Collector Frequently Asked Questions

Wisconsin's electronics recycling law bans many electronics from Wisconsin landfills and incinerators while establishing a statewide program, called E-Cycle Wisconsin, to collect and recycle certain electronics. The law is based on a product stewardship approach, in which manufacturers, retailers, collectors, recyclers, the DNR and consumers all have important responsibilities.

## What is a registered collector?

A registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collector receives eligible electronic devices (EEDs) from households, K-12 public schools and/or Parental Choice Program schools and delivers or arranges for the delivery of the electronics to a registered recycler. Collectors may maintain a permanent drop-off site, host one or more collection events, or run a mail-back program.

There are no restrictions on who may be a collector. Recyclers, local governments, retailers, nonprofits, haulers, manufacturers and private businesses may choose to be collectors. Only collectors working with registered E-Cycle Wisconsin recyclers should become registered.

## If I collect electronics, am I required to be a registered collector?

No. Electronics collectors are not required to be part of this program. If you are collecting electronics on a small scale, or collecting primarily from businesses or governments, we recommend that you do not become part of E-Cycle Wisconsin.

Collectors that are working with manufacturers to meet a manufacturer's recycling obligation must register and participate in E-Cycle Wisconsin.

## What are the advantages of being a registered collector?

Under E-Cycle Wisconsin, manufacturers must pay for the collection and processing of a certain amount of electronics each year. Manufacturers set up contracts with registered recyclers to meet their obligations, usually paying a set number of cents per pound recycled. This generally allows recyclers to accept electronics from collectors at a lower price than would otherwise be possible. In other words, registered collectors may get better deals for their electronics than non-registered collectors because of manufacturer funding.

Also, since registered recyclers must work with registered collectors, you may have better

### Eligible electronic devices under E-Cycle Wisconsin

#### Televisions

DVD players, VCRs and DVRs

Computers (desktop, laptop, netbook and tablet computers and small-scale servers)

#### Computer monitors

Computer mice and keyboards

Other computer accessories (including hard drives, speakers, flash drives and modems)

Desktop printers (including those that scan, fax and/or copy)

E-readers with screens of at least 7" in the longest diagonal direction

#### Fax machines

All of these devices, along with cell phones, are banned from Wisconsin landfills and incinerators as of Sept. 1, 2010.

negotiating power when setting up contracts or agreements for services if you are registered. For example, you may be able to enter into longer term contracts guaranteeing a set price if you can send the recycler a certain amount of electronics each year. The recycler may also be able to provide you with additional services such as setting up containers and meeting your transportation needs.

### **As a local government, do I need to become a collector?**

No. The electronics recycling law does not require recycling responsible units (RUs) or other local governments to collect electronics.

We recommend you consider the following when deciding whether to be a collector:

- Are you receiving requests from residents to collect electronics, or do your residents have few recycling options? To check, visit the DNR's list of collection sites by county.
- Has your community experienced problems with illegal dumping of electronics?
- Are there other governments or private collectors you could work with? You could partner on collections or offer space on government property for another collector to hold an event.
- Do you have staff or volunteer time to properly manage a permanent collection site or hold a collection event?

### **What are the requirements for registered collectors?**

- **Register** with the DNR and report annually online.
- **Work with registered E-Cycle Wisconsin recyclers.**
- **Keep EEDs and non-EEDs physically separate.**
- **Report weights of EEDs** collected under the program and recyclers they were sent to.
- **Report where EEDs were collected**—locations of collection events and permanent sites.
- **Comply** with all state and federal health and environmental safety requirements.

Registered collectors may not use prison labor for collection (Huber/community service is okay).

### **Which electronics are eligible under E-Cycle Wisconsin?**

Eligible electronic devices, sometimes called EEDs, are items that count toward manufacturer credit under E-Cycle Wisconsin. In other words, these are the devices that manufacturers help pay to recycle. Only certain electronics from Wisconsin households, K-12 public schools and Parental Choice Program schools are eligible. See the box on EEDs for a list of electronics eligible for E-Cycle Wisconsin.

Registered collectors must keep non-EEDs separate. This can be done by placing them in separate containers and labeling them as non-EEDs. Ask your recycler how it would like non-EEDs managed at your site to ensure that they do not mix with EEDs, and check the recycling records the recycler provides to you to ensure that EED and non-EED weights are being recorded separately.

Although many electronics recyclers can recycle anything with a battery or a cord, and we encourage you to collect as many types of electronics as your recycler will accept, non-EEDs do not count toward the weight you collect for registered recyclers and are not eligible for manufacturer funding. Please note that stereo equipment and appliances, including microwaves, are *not* EEDs.

### **How should registered collectors maintain records to make reporting easier?**

Registered collectors are required to maintain records and report online annually to the DNR. The information you need to report includes the location(s) where you collected EEDs, how many pounds of EEDs you collected and which registered recycler(s) you sent the EEDs to.

Any pounds you collected from counties designated as “rural” under the electronics recycling law receive extra credit (1.25 pounds for every 1 pound collected), and you will be asked to break out what you collect by urban and rural counties using the urban/rural counties map.

Any registered recycler you work with will provide you with a certificate of recycling or similar report that lists the weight of electronics it received from your site(s) after each pickup/delivery. If your site has a scale to weigh loads, record the

weights of EEDs you collect before they are sent to the recycler and then reconcile it with the weight the recycler reports to you.

Keep a spreadsheet of hauling dates and weight data for each collection location you manage throughout the E-Cycle Wisconsin program year (July 1-June 30). At the end of the program year, compare this spreadsheet to a year-end summary report from your recycler (ask for one if the recycler does not send it to you) and resolve any differences. Enter the EED weight information into the annual reporting form.

You should keep records of the weight you collect under the program for at least three years.

### **How should collected electronics be stored?**

Collection sites should strive to store electronics so that they are protected from the elements. If it is not possible to store electronics in a covered location, make sure they are shipped frequently to your recycler so that they arrive in the best condition possible. Please refer to the Collector Best Management Practices video and handout for more information.

### **Do registered collectors have to accept electronics from everyone?**

No. While you may not discriminate (according to federal laws), and we encourage collectors to accept electronics from any individual or school, you can place restrictions on your collection. For example, you may limit the use of your site to residents of a certain geographic area or to customers of your store.

You may also restrict the number of electronics people can bring to your collection site or event at one time, or the types of electronics you accept. You may want to consider refusing non-intact devices (smashed or disassembled electronics) if your recycler will not take them and/or if you are unable to store these items indoors.

If you have restrictions, make sure to include them in the listing for your collection site(s) on the DNR website. Make sure the restrictions are also clear on your own website, on signs and in printed materials you distribute. It’s also a good idea to have a list of locations to direct people to if they have items you don’t accept.

*Collection event clean up, Rusk County 2010.*



## Do registered collectors have to be on the DNR's list of collection sites?

Yes. If you're a registered collector, your collection sites need to be on our public list. If you are worried about getting too many electronics, you can put restrictions in place like those described above and they will be posted on the website. If you are not comfortable being listed as a collection site, you should not be a registered collector.

## What should registered collectors charge?

Collectors are not required to charge for electronics. However, local governments in particular should calculate anticipated costs of serving as a collector and determine what, if any, fee is needed to cover costs.

Make sure you have a clear, up-front understanding with the recycler you are working with about what it will charge you for. Make sure to ask about charges for transportation, for non-eligible devices, for broken electronics and for collecting more than the amount you expected.

Most collectors that charge have a per-item fee, either for all items or for larger items like TVs. Some others charge a per-pound fee or a small flat fee for access to the collection site. You can experiment with different fee structures, like taking some items for free and charging for others; holding free events but charging at a permanent site; or offering a coupon or other benefit in exchange for a fee, to see what works best for your situation.

If you would like more information about what other collectors are charging or options for setting up a pricing system, contact the DNR e-cycling staff at [DNRWAE-cycling@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRWAE-cycling@wisconsin.gov).

## What should a collector look for when selecting a recycler?

Be sure the recycler offers the services you need. For example, if you have limited storage space, be sure the recycler can pick up the electronics on a regular basis. If the recycler is providing you with containers, make sure they meet the needs of your site in terms of size and material, and that you have the means to load the containers into a truck for hauling.

By working with recyclers registered with E-Cycle Wisconsin, you have some assurance that they are managing e-waste responsibly. Registered recyclers are inspected by the DNR and need to meet higher standards than recyclers who are not part of the program. However, it is still important that you do your due diligence to ensure any recycler you work with is managing your electronics appropriately.

Make sure the recycler can account for where materials are going and can verify that they are being recycled in a responsible manner. Ask specifically about how the recycler handles personal data stored on computers and other devices.

E-Stewards, R2, ISO 14001 or other independently audited certification programs, though not required, can

*Workers safely storing electronics inside a roll-off in Dunn County.*



give you a higher level of confidence in your recycler: DNR includes information about certifications on its list of registered recyclers.

Shop around for your recycler. Keep in mind that you may be responsible for the clean-up of electronics that you collected if they are found mismanaged after they leave your site. The best way to compare services and environmental management practices is by talking with several registered recyclers. Refer to the Choosing a Recycler checklist for questions to ask recyclers.

### Can a registered collector disassemble or salvage parts from EEDs?

In most cases, no. Any electronics disassembled by a collector cannot count toward manufacturers' targets for E-Cycle Wisconsin, unless that collector is also registered as a recycler. Disassembly means breaking down electronics into individual components for resale, reuse or further recycling. This includes clipping cords and removing batteries or toner cartridges.

Disassembly is only acceptable if your recycler has explicitly agreed to it or has requested it for ease of handling, safety and/or transport reasons. Any removed items should be sent with the EEDs to the recycler.

### Why recycle electronics?

It is important to recycle electronics because of the valuable, reusable materials they contain. These include plastics, metals, circuit boards and glass. Recycling or reusing these materials reduces environmental impacts and economic costs by reducing the need for virgin materials in new electronics and other products.

Electronics also contain harmful materials including lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, other heavy metals and chemical flame retardants. When landfilled, incinerated, illegally dumped or improperly stored, these can leach into the environment, where they may affect human and environmental health.

### Have more questions?

Call or e-mail DNR E-Cycle Wisconsin staff at (608) 266-2111 or [DNRWAc-cycling@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRWAc-cycling@wisconsin.gov).

*Worker wearing personal protective equipment at a registered recycling facility in Wisconsin.*



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