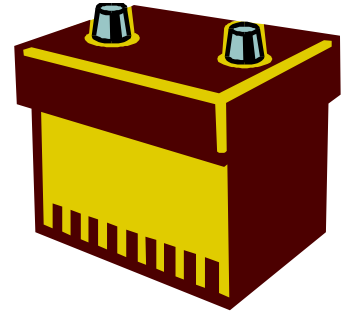

FACT SHEET

USED LEAD ACID BATTERY MANAGEMENT

State of Hawaii Law

Chapter 342I, HRS prohibits disposal of lead acid batteries in household rubbish, in landfills, or discarded on public and private properties, grounds, or waters. Instead, these batteries must be delivered to battery retailers/wholesalers, or to collection or recycling facilities permitted by the Department of Health.



The law also states that "No lead acid battery retailer or wholesaler, or authorized collection or recycling facility, shall accept for disposal any lead acid batteries that have had their electrolyte removed, unless cracks in the battery shell due to aging or accident are in evidence to indicate passive leaking of the electrolyte." Batteries that have had their electrolyte removed are to be disposed as hazardous waste.

Problems from Improper Lead Acid Battery Management

Spent lead acid batteries contain two toxic substances: lead compounds and the acid. When released into the environment, these substances can contaminate air, water, and soil. Lead can be taken up by animals and plants, and eventually find its way into the food stream and drinking water supply. When ingested or contacted by humans, lead and acid can cause both short-term and long-term health damage.

Lead: Lead and lead compounds within the batteries are considered hazardous to human health. The health effects for lead once in the body can cause various brain and kidney complications for both children and adults (ATSDR, 1990).

Acid: Vehicle batteries also contain sulfuric acid, a highly corrosive substance, which can cause severe burns. The acid may also contain dissolved lead.

NOTE: Those who turn in used vehicle batteries for recycling do not need to obtain a solid waste permit, nor report their actions to the Department of Health. However, if batteries or electrolytes are disposed of improperly, the dumpers are subject to penalties and liabilities allowable under state solid waste and/or hazardous waste regulations.

How to Manage Lead Acid Batteries

For Residents, Private Businesses and Government Agencies:

State law prohibits disposal of any lead acid battery. Do not dispose it with household refuse, discard them on unattended properties, or dump it at landfills. Take them to battery retailers/wholesalers, or battery collection or recycling facilities permitted by the Department of Health.

Lead acid battery retailers/wholesalers are required to accept used lead acid batteries from customers. Many will accept used automotive batteries at no charge without the need to purchase a new one.

Also, take used automotive batteries to a collector or recycler who is permitted under HRS, Chapter 342H by the Department of Health. These authorized battery collection and/or recycling facilities usually charge a nominal fee.

(Residents only) Hold batteries for the next county-wide household hazardous waste (HHW) collection event. Contact your county Solid Waste Division or Recycling Office for details.

For Retailers and Wholesalers:

State law requires lead acid battery retailers/wholesalers to accept used lead acid batteries from customers for recycling. Retailers/wholesalers must accept an amount of used car batteries at least equal to the number of new batteries purchased at the point of sale. Some battery retailers/wholesalers do not accept used lead acid batteries from customers who do not also purchase a new battery.

Written notices must be posted at the point of sale, stating that the battery retailer/wholesaler accepts or takes back lead acid batteries for recovery purposes. Contact the Department of Health, Office of Solid Waste Management at (808) 586-4240 to obtain additional copies of written notices for posting.

Any price advertisements for lead acid batteries must include the statement "The price includes disposal of your old battery." It is improper to give customers a discount by deducting disposal costs from the price of a new battery. It is also improper to charge customers an additional fee(s) for disposal of their old battery, or batteries.

Recordkeeping is required for retailers/wholesalers who accept more than five used batteries per day. The minimum recordkeeping requirements are stated in Chapter 342I, HRS. These records may be inspected by the Department staff.

To minimize potential health risks from prolonged accumulation and storage of used batteries, battery wholesalers who accept used batteries in transfer from battery retailers have a time period of ninety (90) days to remove batteries from the retail points of collection.

Used batteries accumulated by battery retailers/wholesalers shall be delivered either to permitted collection facilities, to secondary lead smelters permitted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, or to hazardous waste recycling facilities permitted by the Department of Health that can neutralize the liquid electrolyte. Facilities that neutralize the liquid electrolyte then deliver the batteries to secondary lead smelters.

For more information, contact the Department of Health, Office of Solid Waste Management, 919 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 212, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814. Phone: (808) 586-4240. Fax: (808) 586-7509.

Reference: United States. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Public Health Statement: Lead. Washington: ATSDR, 1990.