

Dispose Of Lithium Batteries

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not regulate the disposal of batteries in small quantities; large quantities are regulated under the Universal rules of Hazardous Waste regulations (40 CFR PART 273). Lithium batteries are currently disposed of after their use. While as of now there are no federal regulations for disposal of lithium batteries, individual states or localities can establish their own guidelines for battery disposal, and should be contacted for any disposal guidelines that they may have.

Batteries should be in a discharged condition prior to disposal. Generally, a lithium cell is considered to be discharged once its voltage reaches 2 volts or less under a current of C/100 (C is the rated capacity of the battery in ampere-hours). Some companies suggest that after you discharge the battery fully that you ensure wire leads are insulated, and then soak the battery in a mixture of 60 parts water to 1 part salt, by weight, for 2-3 days. Once discharged, lithium batteries can be shipped to a hazardous waste facility for incineration.

The shipment of live or discharged lithium batteries is governed by the Department of Transportation (DOT) in their Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR), paragraph 173.185(j).

Incineration of lithium cells and batteries by consumers is not recommended. Incineration should be done at a properly permitted facility that can handle this waste. Contact your waste handler if you are unsure whether or not a facility can handle the batteries.

Regulations and laws pertaining to the recycling and disposal of lithium batteries vary from country to country as well as by state and local governments. You will need to check the laws and regulations where you live.

For home disposal, many stores offer free recycling of rechargeable batteries. If no outlet is available in your area, it is safe to dispose of these discharged batteries in your regular trash. As always, check with your local laws to make sure that this is acceptable.