



## Used Batteries

### Batteries

Batteries contain sulfuric acid and lead. Both of these materials can damage the environment and pose a safety hazard if handled improperly.

### The Dangers

About one-quarter of the average lead-acid battery is composed of sulfuric acid. Sulphuric acid is a corrosive liquid which can sterilize soils and cause severe burns to skin. Also, sulfuric acid mists are a suspected carcinogen.

Another two-thirds of the average battery is made up of lead or lead compounds. Lead, a heavy metal, can be fatal if ingested or absorbed through the skin. In the environment, lead does not degrade naturally and may accumulate, causing soil and water to become contaminated.

### Recycling and Disposal

Every year in the Yukon we dispose of about 6,400 used lead-acid batteries. This amounts to about 106 tonnes of batteries, containing about 71 tonnes of lead and 26 tonnes of acid.

Currently, about 90 percent of batteries in Canada are recycled. The goal is to recycle all lead-acid batteries, thus preventing large amounts of lead and sulfuric acid from contaminating the environment.

### Regulations

Under the Yukon Special Waste Regulations, you must have a Special Waste Permit if you handle more than five kilograms of lead-acid batteries per month.

### What You Can Do

When storing batteries, or preparing them for shipment, follow the steps outlined below to help prevent leaks and spills and to avoid contamination of the storage site:

- Place batteries in secondary containment (i.e. on a liner or berm) that will not allow the acid to escape.
- Place the batteries on wooden pallets. Do not make stacks of batteries more than **three layers thick**. Separate each layer with a sheet of plywood or other suitable material.
- **Layers of pallets** should not be stacked more than **two** high.

- Before putting waste batteries on the pallet, place enough plastic sheeting on it to completely enclose all of the batteries in a continuous sheet of plastic. All sides must be wrapped to protect the batteries from the weather and to prevent any acid from being discharged into the environment.
- After wrapping the batteries in plastic, strap the stack of batteries to the pallet to prevent the batteries from shifting.

### Contaminated Sites

A battery storage area can be contaminated by either small continuous releases of special waste such as acid or lead, or by one large spill. Cleaning up a contaminated site costs more money than installing secondary containment or packaging used batteries properly in the first place.

### Spills

If a special waste is spilled, the person who possesses the waste, or is in control of it at the time of the spill, must report the incident. Containment and clean-up action should begin as soon as possible to protect human health and the natural environment.

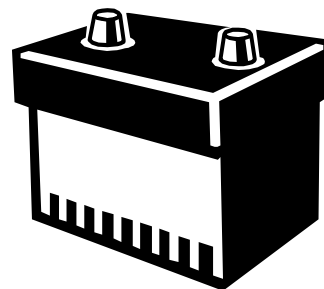
**Spills must be reported immediately to the  
Yukon Spills Report Centre in Whitehorse at (867) 667-7244  
(24 hour service).  
*Collect calls are accepted.***

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**For more information on the proper handling and storage of special wastes, please contact:**

Environmental Programs Branch  
Department of Environment (V-8)  
Government of Yukon  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, YT  
Y1A 2C6

Phone: (867) 667-5683  
Toll Free: 1-800-661-0408 (extension 5683)  
Fax: (867) 393-6205  
email: [envprot@gov.yk.ca](mailto:envprot@gov.yk.ca)



Copies of Yukon regulations may be viewed online at <http://environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/monitoringenvironment/> under the "Standards & Approvals" section, or at any Yukon Public Library, territorial agent, territorial representative or regional services office. You may purchase copies at the Inquiry Centre, Yukon Government Administration Building, 2071-2nd Avenue in Whitehorse, or by mail from the Subscriptions Clerk, Yukon Government Queen's Printer, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6 (phone (867) 667-5783 or toll free 1-800-661-0408 extension 5783).