

Battery Recycling

Did you know that batteries contain valuable metals that can be recycled? To promote battery recycling, the SJSU Battery Collection Program was created by the Office of Sustainability and EHS to collect all used or unwanted single-use and rechargeable batteries from campus in order to protect the environment, water supplies, and promote sustainable practices.

Batteries as Regulated Waste

- All batteries are considered hazardous waste in California when they are discarded. This includes all battery sizes (e.g., AAA, AA, A, C, D, button cell, 9 Volt) alkaline batteries, rechargeable and single use lithium batteries, lead acid, and NiCad batteries.
- Batteries fall into a category of hazardous waste called “universal waste.” Universal waste includes common household items such as batteries, fluorescent lamps, instruments containing mercury (e.g., thermometers, mercury switches, or thermostats), and aerosol cans. Universal wastes must not be discarded in solid waste landfills. Universal wastes must be recycled.

Safety Precautions

A damaged lithium battery is a fire hazard and may appear swollen, corroded, leaking, or exhibit burn marks. If used lithium metal or lithium ion batteries show any evidence of damage or swelling, immediately contact ehs@sjsu.edu to respond and remove. Always **tape the battery terminals on all used rechargeable batteries** because it reduces the risk of reaction and a subsequent fire.

Drop-Off Bins

There are used battery drop-off bins located throughout campus. Please refer to the [Battery Collection Bin Location](#) spreadsheet for a listing of available battery collection bin building locations where used batteries may be deposited.

Battery Disposal

Do NOT place used batteries in or near trash containers or dumpsters because they may be accidentally disposed of illegally. State law limits the storage of used batteries to one year of accumulation. SJSU ensures collection bins are emptied at least annually.

Important to Remember

- DO NOT allow temperatures to exceed 125° F (52° C) where batteries are stored.
- DO NOT charge nonchargeable batteries or overcharge rechargeable batteries (Li, NiCad). This may lead to the battery overheating, explosion, or a fire. Always tape the battery terminals on all used **rechargeable** batteries.
- DO NOT put other products (e.g., paper, plastic) into the battery recycling bins.

References

- Office of Sustainability: [Waste Management](#)
- DTSC: [Universal Waste and How to Handle It Fact Sheet](#)
- DTSC: [Universal Waste – Batteries](#)

