

Canadians tossing bulk of batteries into landfills: report

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[CBC News](#)

Only about two per cent of batteries are being recycled in Canada, while the rest — thousands of tonnes of them — are ending up in landfills, according to a new report released by Environment Canada.

By 2010, Canadians are expected to throw away 495 million rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries, up from 347 million tossed in 2004, says the report, published earlier this month.

"The number of consumer batteries discarded is increasing dramatically with an increased demand for consumer electronics and the rapid rate at which new electronic products which require batteries are being introduced into the market," the report says.

It says batteries can leak heavy metals such as nickel cadmium and lithium into the soil and water supplies, putting people at risk of developing health problems, including damage to the nervous system. The report notes, however, that it's not clear how serious the risk is.

It also suggests that the low recycling rates indicate that voluntary programs have not caught on with consumers.

MEC offers consumers recycling program

Some environmentalists have recommended putting the onus on manufacturers, requiring them to recycle the batteries they produce.

Retailer Mountain Equipment Co-op offers to collect and recycle all the dead batteries sold with its products.

Brad Clute, a Calgary spokesman for the outdoor gear store, said that while the program is expensive to run, customers have responded eagerly and the company sent 400 kilograms of dead batteries to a recycling plant in B.C. last year.

"I think last year the bill was probably around between \$1,500 and \$2,000 for all the batteries we took in and shipped off for recycling," he said.

With files from the Canadian Press

<http://www.cbc.ca/consumer/story/2007/04/11/landfills-batteries.html>