

With recycling one of the easiest ways to make a difference in our ecological future, The Ojai Valley Green Coalition has begun a new procedure for collecting toxic wastes beginning with a free battery recycling service. Ojai residents are offered recycling through city trash pick-up but batteries are a toxic item and can not be mixed in with other recyclables.

Ojai Creates and The Ojai Valley News have previously provided a drop off for used batteries but OVLC members wanted to make it easier for people all over Ojai to recycle their batteries.

Talking to merchants at six new locations around town, members gave each a white plastic bucket and asked them to serve as drop-off points for customers wishing to recycle batteries.

Coalition members then made up a bookmark-sized "Infomark" listing seven battery recycling locations. The "Infomark", made of recycled paper and available at all battery recycling stations, serves as a reminder to re-cycle when placed on a kitchen cupboard or fridge, or when used as a bookmark.

"I know it's working because I'm picking up full buckets," said Marcia Doty who picks up the batteries to be recycled weekly. According to Doty in five weeks they have gathered 200 pounds of batteries.

The Coalition is working on expanding the program to include other toxic items, starting with e-waste, which includes computers, cell phones, toys and other electronics. They'd also like to establish a local pickup of paint, varnish and later fluorescent bulbs, which contain a toxic waste, methyl mercury.

In case you're asking if it's worth the bother to recycle:

- According to the EPA over 73 million batteries are sold annually in the U.S. containing heavy metals including nickel cadmium, alkaline, mercury, nickel metal hydride and lead acid.
- If sent to a landfill batteries leak into land, water and air.
- Recycling batteries can save resources by recovering plastic and metals that can be used to make new batteries.

To avoid waste Earth911, a recycling organization recommends these simple tips:

- Check to see if you already have the batteries on hand before buying more.
- When suited to the task, buy hand operated items that function without batteries.
- Look for the batteries that have less mercury and heavy metals
- Consider rechargeable batteries for some needs, but remember that they also contain heavy metals such as nickel-cadmium.

Battery recycling locations are:

- Radio Shack, 307 E Matilija St.
- Ojai Creates!, 602 E. Ojai Ave
- Ojai Valley Surplus, 952 E. Ojai Ave.
- Dexter's Camera, 1117 Maricopa Hwy, Ojai and 484 E. Main St., Ventura
- The Krotona Quest Bookstore, 47 Krotona Rd
- The Farmer and the Cook, 339 W. El Roblar
- Ojai Farmer's Market
- The Ojai Valley News, 408-A Bryant Circle

More information is available at [epa.gov/msw/battery.htm](http://epa.gov/msw/battery.htm), or [earth911.org/recycling/battery-recycling](http://earth911.org/recycling/battery-recycling).