



Managing Discarded Televisions

Valuable materials can be recovered from televisions and other electronics. These materials can be used to make new products. Did you know gold, copper and other precious metals are used in circuit boards and other electronic components? Televisions also contain glass and plastics as well as harmful materials, like lead, chromium, mercury and polybrominated flame retardants. Managing discarded televisions properly conserves natural resources and prevents pollution. Recovering and reusing materials reduces the need to mine for new raw materials and manufacturing with recovered materials uses less energy.

Analog to Digital Television Transition

According to the Federal Communications Commission, on June 12, television broadcast stations are required to switch from analog to digital broadcasting. This change has many consumers wondering if they can continue to use the televisions they have, or what to do with a television they no longer want.

Will my TV still work?

If you have a newer television with a digital tuner, you are ready to receive the new signals. Older televisions were designed to receive broadcasts in analog format. After the change to digital broadcast, your analog TV will continue to work if:

- You subscribe to a pay TV service such as cable or satellite. These services will convert the new signal back to analog for you.
- Buy a digital converter box. This is a device that will sit on your TV and convert the new signal to analog for you. Converter boxes connect to your television in much the same way a VCR does.

Certified digital-to-analog converter boxes cost between \$50-\$70. To help consumers pay for the converter boxes, the federal government is offering U.S. households up to two \$40 coupons. Coupons are free, but expire after 90 days and supplies are limited. To apply for your converter box coupons visit www.dtv2009.gov or call 888-388-2009. This Web site and hotline number can provide you with more information on the converter box coupon program, how to tell if your television is analog or digital and where to find a converter box retailer near you.

What should I do with my TV if it won't receive the digital broadcast signal?

Reuse it - Just because a television cannot receive the digital signal, does not mean everything will stop working. You can still play video games or watch movies and other videos with your VCR or DVD players.

Donate it - Schools, nursing homes and other organizations might have a need for a television to watch movies or even training videos. By donating your unwanted, working television, you are helping that group provide a service that they could not otherwise afford. You could also contact local resale or thrift shops to see if they are interested in your discarded TV.

Recycle it – In many communities there are environmentally friendly options available to recycle, instead of discarding, an old television. A legitimate electronics recycler can remove potentially hazardous materials from inside a television. Doing so will not only help prevent those materials from accidentally being released into the environment, but also provide valuable materials for use in new products. To recycle your TV:

- Contact the manufacturer or local TV retailers to find out if they have a take-back program.
- Take your electronic waste, or e-scrap, to one of the recyclers registered with the state. A list is available on the e-cycle Missouri Web page at www.e-cyclemo.org or by calling the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at 800-361-4827.
- Participate in a collection event hosted by your city, county or solid waste management district. For a list of district contacts, visit the department's Solid Waste Management Program Web site at www.dnr.mo.gov/env/swmp or call 800-361-4827.

Note that fees are often necessary to cover the costs the recycler incurs to dispose of the hazardous components. Check with the individual recycler to find out more about their services and fees.

Safe disposal – Although recycling services for TVs and other electronics continue to grow, you may find the options listed above are not available in your community. If you are not able to find a way to reuse or recycle your old TV, you will need to use a legitimate disposal option. Televisions from residences can legally be discarded with household trash. Check with your waste hauler to find out if they have special procedures or fees for collecting your TV. If you do not use a waste hauler, contact the nearest permitted landfill or transfer station.

To avoid violating solid waste laws, remember that a discarded TV:

- Cannot be burned on site.
- Cannot be buried on site.
- Cannot be hauled to private or public property and dumped, burned or buried, even with the landowner's permission.

For More Information

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