

introducing a new
Topic Hub™

ELECTRONIC WASTE

A quick guide to essential P2 information on Electronic Waste, with a compilation of the best available on-line resources.

Why P2 for Electronic Waste?

Unlike common household waste, electronic waste (e-waste) can contain hazardous or toxic materials such as lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, and some flame retardants. Electronics currently are about 2-5% of the municipal solid waste stream, but the National Safety Council reports that about 75% of computers taken out of service are stockpiled, delaying their ultimate disposal. Cleaning up computer and electronic waste could cost industry as much as \$242 million, depending on what solutions are chosen.

How Do Electronic Purchasers and Manufacturers Prevent Pollution?

When purchasing new equipment, first consider whether it is required or whether existing equipment can be upgraded. Choose products that are durable, upgradeable, and recyclable. Purchase low-energy consuming products from a manufacturer with a "take back" program. One tool available to help choose an environmentally friendly product is the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool, www.epeat.net.

Manufacturers should choose construction materials that contain as few toxics as possible, are refurbished or recycled, and are easily separated and recyclable. The Restriction on Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS) provides good guidance. In addition to designing the product with end-of-life recycling in mind, institute a take-back program. Follow EnergyStar criteria for less power use.

Best P2 Resources at Your Fingertips

Topic Hubs are peer-reviewed on-line primers that include background and operational information plus specific opportunities for pollution prevention. They include an extensive list of links for the "best of the best" on-line resources: manuals, checklists, fact sheets, case studies, etc. The Electronic Waste Topic Hub also includes information on e-waste legislation, corporate and non-profit initiatives, plus options for what to do with e-waste before discarding.

Topic Hubs are valuable resources for P2 programs, regulators, environmental managers, and industry. P2Rx centers have more than 55 Topic Hubs available on a wide range of issues covering many industrial sectors. Check them out at www.p2rx.org/hubs.

Did You Know?

- A 2004 report by the California Department of Toxic Substances tested seven electronic products types (microwave ovens, VCRs, printers, CPUs, cell phones, telephones, and radios) and found each product type exceeded at least one hazardous waste criterion.
- The U.S. generates five to seven million tons of e-waste each year.
- California, Maine, Maryland, and Washington have all passed electronics recycling legislation.
- Landfill bans have been passed in Arkansas, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and North Carolina.
- Many states and regions are working on or have enacted legislation to recycle e-waste. The Midwest region (MN, MI, IL, WI, OH, and IA) and the Northeast Region (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, PA, NY, DE, NJ, and CT) are working on producer-paid legislation.

**View the complete
Electronic Waste
Topic Hub at
p2rx.org/hubs**

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How to Use the Topic Hub™ Web Resource

The screenshot shows the WRPPN (Western Regional Pollution Prevention Network) website. The header includes the WRPPN logo and navigation tabs: Home, News/Events, Resources, Studies, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Resources: P2Rx™ Topic Hub Project' and features a search bar with 'Auto Repair' entered. A left sidebar contains a 'Table of Contents' with links for 'Background and Overview', 'Operations', 'Where To Go for Help', 'Glossary of Terms', and 'Reference Documents'. The main content area displays the 'Auto Repair Table of Contents' with a welcome message and sections for 'Background and Overview' and 'Operations'. Annotations with arrows point to various features: 'Navigate to all Subsections' points to the navigation tabs; 'Search the references used for this Topic Hub' points to the sidebar; 'Search Hub by Keyword' points to the search bar; 'Access Any Topic Hub' points to the dropdown menu; and 'Read an overview of the issues' points to the main content area.

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