



## Guide to Used Battery Management

### Background:

On February 11, 1993, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed to add to hazardous waste regulations a set of streamlined requirements for collecting certain widely dispersed hazardous waste (58 FR 8102), which are called "universal wastes." These wastes share several characteristics:

- They are frequently generated in a wide variety of settings other than the industrial or research setting, usually associated with hazardous wastes
- They are generated by a vast community, the size of which poses implementation difficulties for both those who are regulated and the regulatory agencies charged with implementing the hazardous waste program
- They may be present in significant volumes in non-hazardous waste management systems.

The final rule, known as the Universal Waste Rule, is intended to facilitate the environmentally-sound collection and increase the proper recycling of batteries. Rather than trying to manage these diverse waste streams according to the hazardous waste regulations and the regulatory burden associated with such management the EPA has issued a relaxed set of procedures to assist in managing batteries, pesticides and mercury containing thermostats. Waste pesticides are currently managed under our regular hazardous waste program and mercury containing equipment are handled in a separate guidance document ("Universal Waste Regulations"). The EPA anticipates adding additional materials to the list of universal wastes in the future.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Battery** means a device consisting of one or more electrically connected electrochemical cells that are designed to receive, store, and deliver electric energy. An electrochemical cell is a system consisting of an anode, cathode, and an electrolyte, plus such connections (electrical and mechanical) as may be needed to allow the cell to deliver or receive electrical energy. The term battery also includes an intact, unbroken battery from which the electrolyte has been removed. It does not include electrical generators but only includes devices that can store electrical power.

**Battery Collection Container** means a battery accumulation canister used to accumulate used batteries at or near the site of generation on campus. These

containers are no longer provided by this office because many have either been damaged or have disappeared over time. It is the responsibility of the used battery generator to contain used batteries in a leak-proof collection container and labeled in accordance with EPA regulations. Labels are available from this office. Call this office for a special waste pickup if the battery is leaking.

**On-site** means the same or geographically contiguous property that may be divided by public or private right-of-way, provided that the entrances and exit between the properties is at a cross-roads intersection, and access is by crossing as opposed to going along the right of way. We are not allowed to accept batteries from off-site unless the site is classified as a Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (CESQG). If you generate used batteries at home you should contact your local solid waste authority or recycler for disposal options. For departments that are not on the main campus call this office for further guidance.

**Universal Waste Handler** means the owner or operator of a facility that generates or receives universal waste from other universal waste handlers, accumulates universal waste, and sends universal waste to another universal waste handler or to a destination facility. It does not include the treatment, disposal, recycling or transportation of universal waste. Risk Management and Safety is the Universal Waste Handler for the University.

## **LEAKING BATTERIES**

If you have a leaking battery, please place it in a sealed plastic bag and give us a call. Leaking batteries must be managed as regulated hazardous wastes. Do not place unpackaged leaking batteries in Battery Collection Containers. If you place a leaking battery in with non-leaking batteries we will have to manage the entire container under the more stringent hazardous waste regulations and your Department will be charged for extra disposal fees. You will be required to fill out an Internal Manifest and a Chemical Waste tag since you will be a generator of hazardous waste. The Internal Manifest is available on AU's Environmental Management web page.

## **CAR BATTERIES**

There are certain exemptions under the regular hazardous waste regulations for car batteries that are recycled. According to EPA, 90% of all car batteries are being currently recycled and they see no reason to change the regulations concerning car batteries. Units that generate car batteries should have recycling programs in place. If an unexpected car battery is generated by your department you can contact this office for assistance.

In order for Hazardous Materials Management to remove Used Batteries from a point of generation at Auburn University, the generator must implement the following requirements:

1. Properly package any used batteries in an appropriate Battery Collection Container;

2. Close the battery Collection Container when not introducing used batteries;
3. Affix an appropriately completed “AU Recycles” green Universal Waste label to the box;
4. Store the Battery Collection Container in an appropriately designated area; and
5. Contact Hazardous Materials Management for a pickup of the Used Batteries.

**DO NOT TRANSPORT UNIVERSAL WASTE TO HAZ MAT WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL**

For more information, download the document “Universal Waste Regulations” from the Environmental Management web page at:

[www.auburn.edu/rms/universal-waste.html](http://www.auburn.edu/rms/universal-waste.html)