



**North Central Nebraska
Resource Conservation Development
and
Planning Council**
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Don't Toss 'Em – Battery Recycling Event

Most of us have them – old batteries tucked away in a kitchen drawer, sitting on a workbench, or piled in a box in the garage. While it may seem harmless to toss an old battery in the trash, that small item can create a serious problem. Improper disposal has become a growing safety concern.

When batteries are crushed, punctured, or exposed to water in garbage trucks, transfer stations, or landfills, they can spark fires. Facilities across the country have reported increasing numbers of battery-related fires, many linked to lithium-ion batteries commonly found in cordless tools, rechargeable household items, and electronics. In addition to the fire risk, batteries contain materials that can contaminate the soil and water if they are not managed properly.

With battery use continuing to increase and recognizing these concerns, Nebraska recently adopted the Safe Battery Collection and Recycling Act, which will establish a statewide battery recycling network and place new restrictions on disposing of many batteries in landfills starting in 2028. Before the program is fully implemented, several locations across the state have been selected to serve as test collection sites.

The North Central Nebraska RC&D is among the first organizations helping roll out battery recycling opportunities across Nebraska. Battery collection boxes will be available at the RC&D booth in the Rock County Community Center during the Sandhills Ranch Expo in Bassett, Nebraska. The event will be on June 17th from 10:00 am – 7:00 pm, and June 18th from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.

Items accepted include rechargeable batteries up to 11 pounds and under 300 watt-hours, commonly found in power tools, digital cameras, and gaming controllers. Battery types accepted are lithium-ion, small sealed lead acid, nickel cadmium, nickel metal hydride, and nickel zinc. Single-use batteries including lithium primary, carbon zinc, alkaline, and coin/button batteries will also be accepted along with all types and ages of cell phones.

No damaged or defective batteries, no batteries that are part of a recall, no wet-cell, or car, batteries, and no batteries weighing over 11 pounds or exceeding 300 watt-hours will be accepted. A battery identification and safety guide is available at www.batterynetwork.org. Details can also be found at www.northcentralrcd.com, or by calling 402-340-1530.

“Most people don’t realize that tossing a battery in the trash can create a fire long after it leaves their home,” said Carla Stagemeyer, North Central RC&D Executive Director. “As more rechargeable batteries find their way into everyday items, it’s important to give people a safe and convenient way to recycle them.”

Old batteries may not take up much space, but they shouldn’t be overlooked. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of this collection opportunity. Proper disposal helps reduce fire risks, keeps hazardous materials out of landfills, and ensures batteries are handled the right way from start to finish. It’s a simple step with a big impact.