

# Tips for Recycling Electronics



An employee of Total Reclaim, an electronics recycling company loads us some equipment to be recycled at a recent electronics recycling event at Schnitzer North Creek office park in Bothell.

When Eastside businesses seek recycling assistance, one of their most common questions is “How do we recycle our old computers and other electronics?” As of October 2005, it’s illegal to put these electronic items in the garbage in King County: computers, laptops, computer monitors, televisions and cell phones. Other electronics should also be recycled. Electronics waste, or “e-waste,” has become a hot topic in recent years, as the volume of cast-off electronics has skyrocketed. E-Waste contains lead, cadmium and other toxic materials, and has been linked to various environmental and health problems.

Fortunately, recycling options abound. Here are tips on how to do the right thing environmentally with your obsolete electronic equipment:

**Send e-waste to the right place.** The King County “Take It Back Network” electronics recycling directory ([www.takeitbacknetwork.org](http://www.takeitbacknetwork.org)) lists more than 30 electronics recyclers that serve County businesses. Common fees to drop off equipment are \$8-10 for a computer, \$10-15 for a monitor, \$5-10 for printers and \$20-\$40 for TVs. An excellent reuse market exists for cell phones, so you should never have to pay to recycle those. This list also notes which recyclers will pick up your old electronics, for an additional charge.

**Give it a chance to go back to work.** If you have equipment to get rid of that works fine, consider selling or donating it. The Take It Back listings include organizations that accept donated electronics. But don’t expect a non-profit or school to want your old equipment unless it’s a fairly recent model. To sell equipment, try Craigslist, a free online classified ads service ([www.seattle.craigslist.org](http://www.seattle.craigslist.org) (external)). It’s a popular marketplace, with more than 200 new local listings for used electronics equipment appearing there every day.

**It never hurts to ask.** When you purchase new electronic equipment, ask your vendor if they can take back your old equipment. Many companies will provide free recycling service, or give you a break on the cost of recycling, but sometimes only if you ask.

**Property managers take note.** The Building Owners and Managers Association of Seattle King County (BOMA) and King County Solid Waste Division have jointly produced a free guide to help commercial property managers hold electronics recycling events on their properties. This guide recommends using the “tenants pay” model for holding these events. Two Eastside office parks Trammell Crow’s Kirkland 405 Corporate Center and Schnitzer North Creek in Bothell - helped pioneer this approach by successfully holding recycling events for their tenants. The guide is available online at [www.bomaseattle.org](http://www.bomaseattle.org) (external)

**Stay tuned for new developments.** Landmark legislation signed by Governor Christine Gregoire in March should make it even easier for small businesses to recycle certain electronics equipment, beginning in 2009. This law uses the “product stewardship” model, in which manufacturers, retailers and others help bear the costs of recycling.

**Find help in a flash.** King County and many Eastside cities have environmental staff or consultants who can help you with electronics recycling and other recycling issues.

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