

## **Alkaline Battery Recycling Implementation Fact Sheet**

In 1998 the EPA and AHA targeted a 33% reduction of hospital solid waste sent to landfill or incineration by 2005, and a 50% reduction by 2010. One option for decreasing waste is to recycle alkaline batteries. When alkaline batteries are landfilled or incinerated, heavy metals can leach into the soil or are released into the atmosphere, which end up in our food chain and ultimately in ourselves. When alkaline batteries are incinerated toxic air pollution and toxic ash are created. These toxins are linked to cancer, learning disabilities and other illnesses. As a means to support the health care motto, "First, Do No Harm", follow these steps and implement a battery recycling program at your hospital.

1. Determine the amount of alkaline batteries used by unit. This will help identify the area with the most usage and should be considered for your pilot unit.
2. Meet with your Facilities Department. Discuss options available to your institution for recycling used alkaline batteries. For example, could the company who picks up your hazardous waste pick up separated alkaline batteries for recycling? (Veolia Environmental Services recycle our alkaline batteries at the University of Maryland).
3. Ensure the company who picks up your batteries is recycling them and not placing in a landfill or incinerator.
4. Develop a process plan for pick up and storage of used batteries from the units with your facilities department. Who will pick up the used batteries and where will they be stored?
5. Identify your pilot unit and begin educating the importance of recycling batteries. Such as articles in hospital newsletters, storyboards, Nursing Grand Rounds, etc.
6. Purchase collection canisters. Clearly mark container with what types of batteries could be placed in container and a phone number for pickup and/or questions.
7. Once unit staff and designated pick up department are accustomed to the routine, begin implementation throughout the hospital.
8. Continue education efforts in units as roll out occurs.