



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs) and CRT glass

Sacramento, CA- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is issuing an emergency regulation which will increase the recycling and disposal options for waste Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs) and CRT glass.

CRTs are commonly found in old television sets and computer monitors and must be managed as hazardous waste (due to their content of lead and other hazardous chemicals), once the product is no longer used for its intended purpose. In the past, much of the old CRT glass was recycled to make new CRTs.

As consumers increasingly switch to flat screen TVs and computer monitors, CRT use has been phased out and the demand for CRT glass has fallen. This makes it increasingly difficult for California recyclers to find markets willing to accept and recycle the CRT glass into new products. In 2011 alone, nearly 100 million pounds of residual CRT glass were generated by recyclers dismantling TVs and monitors.

One consequence of the diminished demand is that large quantities of CRT glass are now being stored and accumulated throughout California. Failure to tackle this issue may result in widespread mismanagement of the material. This poses an environmental hazard and is the main impetus behind the emergency regulation proposed by DTSC. (Click [here](#) to see video of old computers, monitors stored in a manner that endangers California's environment.)

“The requirements currently in place that pertain to CRT disposal were established at a time when there was a robust demand for CRT glass by legitimate recycling facilities,” said Karl Palmer, Chief of DTSC’s Toxics in Products Program. “This demand has shrunk to almost zero, leaving recyclers with few options, and increasing the likelihood of mismanagement and the subsequent release of hazardous chemicals, including lead into the environment. This regulation will encourage the development of new recycling technologies and where recycling is not feasible, it will put in place a process and requirements that will allow safe disposal of CRT glass.”

Summary of the Emergency Regulation Provisions:

The emergency regulation lifts some constraints on recyclers that use CRT devices and glass under the universal waste rules.* Furthermore-if they are unable to find a recycling option for their used CRTs, they may send them to an appropriate landfill for disposal if they meet the conditions summarized below:

- (i) CRT glass must be handled in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment.
- (ii) CRT glass, known as funnel glass (which contains high amounts of lead) must be sent to a hazardous waste landfill. These are landfills that are specially constructed to ensure that material containing chemicals do not escape into the environment and thus protects the public and the environment;
- (iii) CRT glass, known as panel glass (which contains lower amounts of lead) may be sent to a solid waste landfill if testing the waste shows there is no risk of lead leaching out into the environment.

The emergency regulation will remain in effect for two years. It requires that recyclers document that their CRTs and CRT glass are recycled or disposed, allowing DTSC to effectively enforce these regulations when necessary. Recyclers that have stored CRTs or CRT glass for longer than six months upon the effective date of the emergency regulations will receive an additional six months to send them to an authorized destination.

Click [here](#) for full details of the CRT emergency regulations

*California's universal waste rules allow certain recycling activities without a hazardous waste facility permit. A recycling facility operating under the universal waste regulations may send CRT glass only to a primary or secondary lead smelter or a CRT glass manufacturer.

Background:

Many unwanted electronic devices are considered hazardous waste in California, due to their high levels of lead and other toxic ingredients. Since 2001, discarded televisions, computer monitors and other electronic wastes have been regulated under a set of rules—known as the universal waste rule—designed to make it easy for households, businesses and other non-industrial generators to send this material to a proper recycling facility.

In recent years, as newer video display technologies have supplanted CRTs, the number of CRT manufacturing facilities in the world has dropped significantly due to the lack of demand. There are no CRT manufacturers in the United States.

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The Mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated properties, identifying and promoting safer ingredients in consumer products, and ensuring stewardship through enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.