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Recycling Stealth Electronics - Earth911.com

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The word “electronics” brings computers, DVD players and TVs to mind. But think about how many items around your house have LED time displays. Your house is full of stealth electronics that should stay out of the garbage. From coffee makers to old alarm clocks, many of your old electronics can be refurbished for resale, which reduces the carbon consequences of its production. Truly obsolete items can be broken down for their component materials. Many of those materials are commodities, and others are dangerous to just throw away. That’s why 25 states and D.C. have passed laws requiring electronics recycling.

Small Appliances

Staples recently added single-serve and drip coffee makers to its free electronics recycling program. People tend to think of coffee makers as appliances rather than electronics, but from a recycling standpoint, small appliances contain the same materials as electronics: steel, plastic, batteries and even computer chips. Does your toaster have multiple settings? If so, it probably contains a microchip.

So far, coffee makers are the only kitchen appliance that Staples will accept. Some curbside recycling programs accept small appliances but check with your local program before putting them in your curbside bin. If your curbside program accepts appliances, they may only salvage scrap metal and discard other reclaimable materials. Private recycling companies can be more thorough.

Handheld Devices

Most of us have obsolete handheld devices scattered around the house with no idea how to get rid of them. Cell phones are the easiest to recycle — you can usually trade in your old phone when you buy a new one. Retro-gamers have created demand for old gaming systems and peripherals. Best Buy refurbishes newer items; GameStop specializes in older systems. But many smaller companies and individuals will recondition older electronics and resell them on eBay or their own websites.