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SPECIAL DISCARDS

Special discards generally include items that are hard to recycle, such as household hazardous waste, chemicals, fluorescent tube light bulbs, paint, textiles, rigid plastics, and batteries. Household hazardous waste was not included in the US EPA or ODNR study, so there is no estimate for the percentage of the waste stream this material comprises. Tires are also generally included in this category. Other special discards include irreparable appliances like stoves, washers and refrigerators; these are also known as “white goods.” In 2012, the ADR reported that 5 tons of household hazardous waste, 16 tons of white goods, and 1,295 tons of tires were collected in the AHSWD.

This group of items is of particular concern because of the limited recycling opportunities available and the potential negative environmental impact such materials could have if not recycled or disposed of properly. Since these items are common, there is great opportunity for repairing and recycling white goods and several businesses and organizations provide such services. Consumers can also be educated to rethink purchasing products like chemical cleaners, and work can be done to redesign such products. Tires are abundant, and have a resale value when recycled and sold as commodities such as running track surfaces and mulch.

Baseline for Special Discards

Opportunities to recycle household hazardous waste are few and far between. The City of Athens hosts a collection on one day every other year that is open only to Athens City and Athens township residents. Places like Lowe’s and Radio Shack accept compact fluorescent lights and batteries. AOZWI has a recycling guide¹ that identifies places to recycle different materials in the Athens and Hocking County area. Twice a year the AHSWD holds a special collection day in each county, accepting materials such as broken appliances, mattresses, and tires, for a fee. Scrap metal and electronics are accepted at no charge.

Tire recycling opportunities are offered most often in Athens County by the Athens City-County Health Department. Tire Amnesty Grants from OEPA fund these efforts. Tire collections are hosted in different townships throughout the year.

¹ <http://ruralaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Recycling-Guide-for-Athens-and-Hocking-Counties.pdf>

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ACTION STEPS FOR SPECIAL DISCARDS

1. INCREASE SELECTIVE USE AND PROPER DISPOSAL OF SPECIAL DISCARDS.

- a. Identify and promote existing special discards recycling opportunities such as electronics, battery, and light bulb collection services.
- b. Promote the use of nonhazardous goods and educate about proper and legitimate disposal of hard-to-recycle materials.

2. INCREASE FREQUENCY OF SPECIAL DISCARD COLLECTION.

- a. Explore best practices and services from around the nation for recycling special discards.
- b. Explore feasibility of and demand for a center for hard-to-recycle materials (CHARM) and increase regional partnerships to use facility.
- c. As a bridge to a CHARM, identify hubs that can collect and store certain types of hard-to-recycle materials until the biannual collection days.
(L)If feasibility is demonstrated, build a CHARM that is open regularly to the public. A case study of a CHARM in Logan County is included in the appendix.

3. EXPLORE BEST PRACTICES FOR EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR).

- a. Explore successes and challenges of EPR policies at the local and state level with special attention to impact on local economy.
- b. Create appropriate local and state-wide EPR policies.¹

¹ One example of such a policy would be charging an upfront disposal fee when a hazardous good or hard-to-recycle item is purchased.