

E-WASTE RECYCLING

Singaporeans are pretty conscious about recycling paper and plastic products. However, when it comes to electrical and electronic items, most of us are pretty clueless. According to a 2015 *Straits Times* article, "Singapore is churning out 60 million kilograms of electronic waste (E-waste) every year – more than the combined weight of 220 Airbus A-380 aircrafts."



E-waste is mostly made up of metal and plastic parts, and generally fall into the following categories:

- Infocommunications technology equipment, such as desktop, laptop and tablet computers, mobile phones and batteries.
- Computer accessories, such as keyboards, modems and mice.
- Home appliances, such as fridges, TV sets, air-conditioners, washing machines, rice cookers, microwave and toaster ovens, as well as vacuum cleaners.
- Gadgets, such as electronic toys and music players.

RESPONSIBLE DISPOSAL

The best way to dispose E-waste is via recycling programmes.

E-waste products contain small amounts of heavy metal, which can lead to environmental problems if they are not processed properly. Recycling also helps conserve our planet's natural resources and reduce mining-related pollution.

As E-waste consists of various components, specialised equipment in controlled environments is needed to take them apart, shred and then extract the materials – plastic, metal, glass and precious metal – that can be turned into new products. For instance, almost 100 per cent of a mobile phone's components can be recycled to generate energy or make new products, such as electronics.

WHERE TO RECYCLE

- Starhub's Renew programme has 235 bins at 185 locations around Singapore that takes used electronic products, ranging from phones and laptops to cables and electronic toys. Their locations can be found on the Starhub website.
- Singtel has recycling bins located at its shops at Comcentre, Tampines Mall, West Mall and Jurong Point.
- Ink and toner cartridges can be recycled via Project Homecoming's bins in participating libraries, such as Ang Mo Kio Public Library and Jurong Regional Library.
- Singapore Polytechnic's recycling programme takes in most E-waste except printer and ink cartridges, saws, household appliances and alkaline batteries.
- Various malls in Singapore, such as Raffles City and Funan Digitalife Mall. ●