North Central Nebraska
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Don't Trash Your Batteries—Recycle Them to Help Prevent Fires

Local fire departments know firsthand how quickly a small spark can become a serious fire. With the growing use of batteries in everyday devices, firefighters are also seeing the importance of preventing battery-related fires before they start.

To reduce the risk, the Atkinson Fire and Rescue Department is working with the North Central Nebraska RC&D to provide a convenient way to safely recycle batteries. The partnership brings together fire prevention and responsible battery disposal. When batteries are tossed into the trash, they can be damaged and spark fires in garbage trucks and landfills.

As battery use continues to increase, Nebraska recently adopted the Safe Battery Collection and Recycling Act, which will establish a statewide battery recycling network and place new restrictions on disposing of many batteries in landfills starting in 2028. Before the program is implemented, locations have been selected as test collection sites. The North Central Nebraska RC&D, in conjunction with the Nebraska Recycling Council, is among the first organizations helping roll out battery recycling opportunities across the state.

Battery collection boxes will be available at the Atkinson Fire Department Open House on Sunday, October 11th, from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Items accepted include rechargeable batteries up to 11 pounds and under 300 watt-hours, commonly found in power tools, digital cameras, and gaming controllers. Battery types accepted are lithium-ion, small sealed lead acid, nickel cadmium, nickel metal hydride, and nickel zinc. Single-use batteries including lithium primary, carbon zinc, alkaline, and coin/button batteries will also be accepted, along with cell phones of all types and ages.

No damaged or defective batteries, no batteries that are part of a recall, no wet-cell or car batteries, and no batteries weighing over 11 pounds or exceeding 300 watt-hours will be accepted. A battery identification and safety guide is available at batterynetwork.org. Details can also be found at northcentralrcd.com or by calling 402-340-1530.

Fire safety starts with all of us, and sometimes, it starts with something as small as a battery.