

What do you do with your old computers and televisions? by Karen Bryan

E-waste refers to electronic items that have reached the end of their “useful life” whether they are broken or have become obsolete. Products such as computers, televisions, DVD players, laptops, printers, and cellular phones may be refurbished or recycled. Electronics contain valuable materials such as silver, copper, iron, aluminum and titanium. So, recycling old devices saves energy and the resources used to recycle them. We should avoid tossing E-waste into landfills since chemicals such as lead, cadmium, and chromium may leach into the soil and pollute water sources. Recycling electronics helps to create jobs, reduce pollution, and conserve landfill space. According to the Electronics TakeBack Coalition, it takes 1.5 tons of water, 530 lbs. of fossil fuel, and 40 lbs. of chemicals to manufacture a single computer and monitor! Luckily, we have disposal options.

The rules are different for personal versus government e-waste. At MCBH, e-waste considered government property can be taken to the S-6 at building 208 (257-3070).

Barracks and housing residents can check the following site for guidance on how to recycle e-waste https://www.opala.org/solid_waste/eWaste.html . There are dozens of options for e-waste recycling on Oahu listed on the website. For example, the Kailua Target store accepts MP3 players, cell phones, and ink cartridges; and, the Goodwill in Kailua accepts computers, laptops, keyboards, printers, monitors, cords, etc. Another good option for residents is to check out the Kōkua Hawai‘i Foundation’s Aloha ‘Āina Recycling Drive calendar at <https://kokuahawaiifoundation.org/calendar/3rs/2020/04/> for a list of dates, locations, and detailed information on recyclable items being collected.

Activity: Draw a picture or write a story that tells how you would help keep e-waste out of local landfills. Would you start an e-waste collection bin at school or in your community? Do you know of other local e-waste recycling options? Post your photos and comments below. Random drawings for prizes will be held when social distancing requirements are lifted.

Mālama i ka ‘āina—care for and live in harmony with the land. Earth Day every day at MCBH.