

## **Durham goes with Province's plan for household hazardous waste**

### **Residents should keep batteries out of the garbage**

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By Reka Szekely

DURHAM -- While the City of Toronto is considering a battery-deposit program similar to that used for beer bottles, the Region of Durham is sticking with a provincial plan to be rolled out this summer.

Currently, Durham collects batteries at four depots licensed for household hazardous waste-- in Brock Township, Oshawa, Port Perry and Pickering-- and picks up the cost of handling the material. They're then sent to Port Colborne where they're recycled.

The depots also collect other hazardous waste such as paint and paint thinners, pesticides, pool chemicals, antifreeze, brake fluid, oil filters, fuels, propane cylinders and more.

In late February, Ontario approved a new plan that aims to double the amount of household hazardous waste (HHW) diverted from landfills. It will combine a depot program, similar to what Durham is doing, with special collection events where people can drop off their material. The big difference is the industries creating the waste will help pick up the tab.

"Under this plan, the industry will pay about 80 per cent of the cost associated with hazardous household waste," said Katherine Ross-Perron, a waste management technician for the Region, adding it would mean tens of thousands of dollars in savings in Durham.

As well, the Region would see more special collection days. It held two last year, one in Clarington and one in Whitby. Overall, there were 169 such special collection events in the province.

"These events can run up to \$10,000 a day just because HHW is a very expensive material (to handle)," she said.

Part of the provincial plan includes adding 255 more events, some of which will be in Durham.

When it comes to batteries, Ms. Ross-Perron said statistics show they make up roughly one per cent of landfilled material. However, they account for 50-to-70 per cent of the heavy metals, including mercury, lead and cadmium, in landfills.

"Although they make up a small portion, they have a huge impact in the landfill."

Last year, CBC's Marketplace did a battery blitz in Port Perry and collected 29,000 batteries in two weeks. Ms. Ross-Perron thinks that means people are uncertain of how to dispose of them.

"Most people don't know what to do with their batteries, so they hang on to them," she said, pointing out that it's free to drop them off at the waste depots.

As well, for years the Region has been encouraging residents to switch to rechargeables, especially when giving toys, gadgets or electronics at Christmas.

Residents should also make sure they're not throwing carbon fluorescent light bulbs, the swirly kind, or tubes into the garbage. They're accepted as HHW too.

"They do contain a small percentage of mercury and should be disposed of properly," said Ms. Ross-Perron.

For more information visit <http://www.region.durham.on.ca/waste>.



AJ Groen / Metroland OSHAWA-- David Metcalfe, an operations technician with Durham Region, with some of the almost 18 tons of batteries the Region collects yearly. Hazardous waste of all kinds can be dropped off free at any of the Region's Waste Management Facilities. March 14

## Durham depots for household hazardous waste

Residents can drop off a long list of household hazardous wastes, including batteries, carbon fluorescent light bulbs, anti-freeze and more, free of charge at the following depots.

The Region's depots are open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Oshawa  
1640 Ritson Rd. N.  
905-433-2050

Port Perry  
1623 Reach St.  
905-985-7973

Brock Township  
Brock Sideroad #17  
705-437-2933

Pickering  
Miller Waste Durham  
7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and until 4 p.m. on Saturdays.  
1220 Squires Beach Rd., Pickering  
905-426-4222