

Dufferin recycles used alkaline batteries

Single-use alkaline batteries have become a recyclable waste item for Dufferin County, but not to be disposed of as a routine item within the Blue Boxes.

Instead, Dufferin has partnered with Raw Materials Company, an approved battery processor for single-use alkaline batteries under the Stewardship Ontario program, and the county has planned a pilot project for curbside pickup.

The pilot project will run from Nov. 11 to 14, and might be repeated annually or semi-annually. Residents will be mailed a special Ziploc container in which to keep the batteries separated from other items. This would be placed atop the Blue Box contents, whence the collector would deposit it into a separate compartment on the truck.

The program does not include life expired rechargeable batteries.

Rechargeable batteries can be brought to our Hazardous and Electronic Waste Events. There are also a few organizations listed in our Take it Back Directory that will accept all household batteries, including Future Shop, Home Depot, Home Hardware and Staples, Waste Communications Co-ordinator Alyssa Broadfoot said in an email response.

In a news release announcing the pilot project, Ms. Broadfoot said that the Orangeville Fire Department wants to remind residents that this is a good time to change the batteries in all of the smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

The time change seemed an appropriate time to renew batteries in those appliances as resetting the clocks could serve as a reminder that no battery is forever.

It would seem Dufferin householders are well aware of the need to refresh batteries. According to Ms. Broadfoot, in 2012, Dufferin County collected 4,250 kg of single-use alkaline batteries through the Household Hazardous & Electronic Waste Events. With each person generating between 0.5 and 3 pounds of battery waste per year, battery recycling needs to be more convenient and accessible. She also said plans are to have a program twice yearly.

Public Works Director Scott Burns is quoted as saying the program is another great opportunity to bring a service right to the door of Dufferin residents.

The program aligns with our goal of increasing waste diversion, prevents environmentally hazardous materials from going to landfill and provides an easy recycling option during the Fire Department's reminder to check your alarms and detectors.

Raw Materials Company uses a special technology capable of recovering the zinc, manganese, potassium and steel from each battery processed.

The company does not incinerate any material and nothing is sent to landfill. All materials that are recovered are sold back into the marketplace within 500 miles of their Port Colborne, ON facility.

Recovered materials are used as micro-nutrients in the Bio Fuel industry and the steel recovered is used to produce new steel, according to the news release.

By Wes Keller