



With the digital TV conversion scheduled for February 17, 2009, many consumers are replacing their old TVs with new flat panel TVs. But what should you do with your old TV? Old TVs shouldn't go into the trash, but should get responsibly recycled. But it's almost impossible for a consumer to know whether your local recycler is really recycling responsibly, or simply exporting your old TV to China or other countries. Here are some suggestions.

New TV or Converter Box?

If you are still deciding whether or not you need a new TV, there are resources to help figure this out. If you have cable or satellite, you don't need a new TV – you will continue to get signal (unless you are on a small cable system). If you use “rabbit ears” and get over-the-air TV signal, you either need a digital TV or a converter box that will translate the digital signal into an analog signal that your old TV can “read.”



FCC's digital TV information site.

The FCC's www.dtv.gov site has lots of information to help you figure out if you need a converter box or not, how to install it, whether you need an additional antennae, and other DTV issues.



Converter box coupon - \$40 off each box.

Go to www.dtv2009.gov/ to apply for a coupon to get \$40 off your converter box. Converter boxes start at about \$60, so this will cover most of the cost. Coupons, which are mailed to you, expire in 90 days. You can get up to 2 per household, but can only use one per eligible converter box purchase. Don't wait until February to apply for this! They are limited in quantity.

Getting Rid of an Old TV?



Don't throw it in the trash or just leave it on the street.

Old tube TVs have many very toxic chemicals in them, including 4-8 pounds of lead. They should not be placed in the landfill or incinerator, even if it's legal in your state. They should not be left out on the sidewalk "for someone to take" since they are often broken open or rained on, which can allow the toxics to escape and hurt someone or get into the groundwater.



But don't use just any recycler.

Here's the bad news – most recyclers will simply export your old TV to developing nations where they cause great harm. We can't continue to dump our old e-waste on people around the globe. So we need to take extra effort to make sure our old TVs get into the hands of a responsible recycler.

How Do You Find a Responsible Recycler?



Look for an e-Steward.

There are some recyclers who voluntarily pledge not to export e-waste. Go to www.e-stewards.org to see if there is an e-steward near you. Or use our map finder [here](#) and click on your state.



Check our Report Card for a TV manufacturer program.

Some of the TV manufacturers now have national programs to take back our old TVs for free. **Sony, Samsung, and LG** all have national programs. **Panasonic, Sharp, and Toshiba** have launched programs in some states.

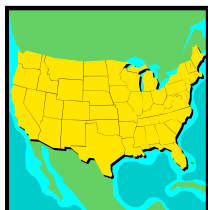
For information on these programs, links to their websites, and scoring on whether these are responsible programs, visit the Electronics TakeBack Coalition's new [TV Recycling Report Card](#).



What about local municipal collection events?

Sadly, many municipalities who sponsor e-waste collection events unknowingly use exporters. These companies make money by exporting our TVs to developing nations. Responsible recyclers usually have to PAY money to safely process the leaded glass in TVs. So unless you are in a state with government

mandated TV recycling programs, or the collection event is underwritten by a corporate sponsor, free TV recycling events usually end up in exports.



Which states have programs that require TV companies to pay for recycling?

Programs currently accepting TVs:

California, Maine, Maryland (some counties), Minnesota

Programs starting January 1, 2009:

Oregon, Washington State, West Virginia

Programs starting July 1, 2009:

New York City, Connecticut



What if none of those options work?

It may sound strange coming from a group that promotes recycling, but if none of those options help you identify a good recycler near you, your best bet may be to hold on to your TV for a little while until better options become available. Starting in 2010, the e-Stewards program (see above) will be a fully audited certification program, so we expect to see many more options by then.

Don't you wish this was all easier? It should be!

Here's What Consumers Can Do:



Tell your Congress member to ban global e-waste dumping.

We need Congress to pass legislation that would stop the exporters from dumping our e-waste in developing countries. Contact your Representative and Senators and ask them to support legislation next year to ban the export of toxic e-waste to developing nations.

[Find your representative.](#) [Find your senator.](#)

TakeBackMyTV.com

Tell the maker of your TV Company to Take Back Your TV.

Use our website to send a message to the TV companies to ask them to offer takeback and recycling of our old TVs.

www.takebackmytv.com

Learn more about the e-waste problem and solutions at:
www.TakeBackMyTV.com and www.electronicstakeback.com