



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of County Commissioners
From: Tatum Flowers, Solid Waste Coordinator
Cc: Mike Russell, Public Works Director
Date: April 23, 2026
Subject: Battery drop-off program

Action Requested

Discuss overview of the battery drop-off program and its benefits to the community.

Background

Household hazardous waste (HHW) collection events are held seven times a year, and that is where residents have historically been able to bring their batteries. During these collection events, staff have had to tape the ends of the batteries to ensure the batteries didn't catch fire. It was time and labor intensive to tape and/or bag batteries. Due to the increase in products that have batteries and the number of battery-related fires at solid waste facilities, we identified a solution to efficiently collect batteries and expand the battery collection to all hours at the transfer station in addition to the HHW events.

Analysis

In 2025, Oregon solid waste facilities reported over 100 battery-related fires at their transfer stations and in their garbage trucks. These fires can endanger workers, facilities, trucks and have almost caused wildfires.

This is a no-cost residential program that will increase access for residents to drop off batteries during business hours at the transfer station, expand the types of batteries collected and reduce the staff time by not having to tape or bag the batteries. Lastly, the goal is to prevent and heavily reduce the number of costly and dangerous fires in our solid waste facilities and trucks.

Recommendation

To support and promote the battery drop-off program at the Columbia County Transfer Station. To advise people to **never** put batteries in their trash or recycling bins and to bring them to the transfer station.

Next Steps

The solid waste division will be promoting the program through news releases, social media, flyers, at events and with community partners.

Attachments

Battery Drop-off Program Flyer



Battery Drop-off Program

Be a superhero, stop the spark.

Batteries can cause fires, recycle your batteries here for free.

For Columbia County residents only.

Accepted items: All cellphones, alkaline, lithium primary, coin or button cell, lithium-ion, nickel-metal hydride, nickel cadmium and non-vehicle sealed lead acid batteries under 25 lbs. Note: Lead-acid batteries are accepted for a fee.

Unaccepted items: Batteries that cannot be removed from products (except cellphones), electric vehicle batteries, battery storage systems

Drop-off location: 1601 Railroad Ave., St. Helens
Columbia County Transfer Station



Columbia County Public Works Solid Waste division organizes, funds programs and educates residents, businesses and schools about waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and household hazardous waste management. The division also owns and oversees the operations of the Columbia County Transfer Station and administers solid waste collection services across county.

Please reach out to us about waste-related questions!

Columbia County Solid Waste Coordinator
(503) 397-7259

Columbia County Transfer Station
(503) 397-9811

