

## Key questions to ask electronics recyclers

### DNR Waste and Materials Management Program

Even if you don't have time to exhaustively research your electronics recycling options, it is important **to ask a few simple questions** to make sure your electronics will be properly recycled, as required by law.

Recyclers should be able to tell you how they handle materials, the percentage of materials they are actually able to recycle or reuse, and what happens to the materials once they are sent to "downstream" recyclers.

It is also critically important to ask about **data destruction** and make sure your recycler has a good system in place for destroying personal, financial and especially confidential data from computers and other electronics.

We recommend that you **call at least two or three different recyclers** and ask them similar questions. This will quickly give you a feel for which are prepared to provide answers and have good processes in place.

Below are some simple questions you can use when investigating your electronics recycling options.

- What electronics does the recycler accept?
- What fees (if any) does the recycler charge, and for what types of equipment?
- Does the recycler offer pick-up service, or do you have to drop items off yourself?
- What does the recycler do with electronics it collects (e.g., send them to another company for demanufacturing/processing, process in-house, refurbish and donate, etc.)?
- What steps does the recycler take to make sure materials with hazardous components don't end up in landfills or incinerators, or improperly disposed of (e.g., illegally dumped) in the United States or overseas?
- What percentage of materials the recycler receives is eventually recycled or reused?
- Will the recycler provide a certificate of recycling/proper disposal?
- What steps does the recycler take to destroy personal and confidential data and ensure the security of personal and financial information?
- What steps does the recycler take to ensure worker safety?

For more information on finding electronics recyclers, visit our discarded electronics Web pages at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/ewaste/>

You can also find more detailed discussion in the DNR publication *Managing Used Computers: A Guide for Environmentally Sound Disposal* at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/publications/aneupub/wa420.pdf>