



RAVEN RECYCLING

Our Commitment is the Environment

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FLUORESCENT BULBS ARE HAZARDOUS WASTE

Today, September 10th, and tomorrow, the 11th, a household hazardous waste and electronic waste collection day is being held at the City of Whitehorse landfill.

The drop-off times for Friday are 10 am to 5:30 pm. On Saturday, it's 10 am to 4 pm.

At the last household hazardous waste collection day, held in August, the types collected were very diverse.

Over two and a half thousand litres of vehicle fluids was collected.

Most of this was oil, but it also included anti-freeze and contaminated fuel.

Lots of aerosol cans were dropped off, as well as flammable liquid containers.

Corrosive liquids and toxic substances were another big hit. A couple of 45 gallon drums worth of these containers were filled.

Some household hazardous waste items were underrepresented.

Very few fluorescent tubes were dropped off. In fact, only four were received.

Fluorescent tubes are considered hazardous waste because they contain volatile mercury vapour.

When a fluorescent bulb is broken, the mercury vapour enters the atmosphere and can travel vast distances.

It gets deposited into lakes and streams where it bio-accumulates in wildlife. It can also affect the health of newborn and developing human babies.

The Yukon Territorial Government has a fancy machine that crushes long fluorescent tubes and sucks out the mercury vapour through a filter.

The filter traps and holds the mercury. The glass, the tube ends and the filters that have trapped the mercury are packaged together and shipped Outside for treatment.

This ensures it doesn't go into the atmosphere and contaminate the air and land.

If a household has these tubes or any type of bulb containing mercury vapour, don't dispose of them in the garbage. Drop them off on a designated household hazardous waste day.



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If it is not possible to make today or tomorrow's household hazardous waste day, save them for the next one in 2005.

Note that only household generated hazardous waste, including fluorescent tubes, are accepted, as opposed to business generated hazardous waste.

Businesses must contact the Yukon Territorial Government Environmental Programs section for information on how they can dispose of hazardous waste and fluorescent tubes. The number is 667-5683.

Electronic waste collection is different, in that businesses as well as households can drop items off.

During the August electronic waste collection over 250 items were gathered. These ranged from small printers to large photocopiers.

Needless to say, most of the items were obsolete computers. It seems that computing power doubles every six months, while prices drop by about fifty dollars a week. Talk about quick obsolescence.

The southern processor of electronic waste has some rather quirky requirements of what will, and what won't, be accepted.

Note that kitchen appliances, such as microwave or toaster ovens, electronic toys or electronic musical equipment will not be accepted.

However, stereos will be. If in doubt, contact Computers in the Schools Yukon at 456-4365 or Raven Recycling at 667-7269.

Every household hazardous waste day lots of paint cartons get dropped off at the City landfill paint-exchange area.

This area, located adjacent to the free store, is the place to drop off unused paint. Anyone is welcome to come and pick up paint for reuse.

It is worth mentioning that the paint exchange is open year-round. Paint can be dropped off and picked up anytime in the spring, summer and fall.

Avoid dropping paint off in the winter, as it freezes. This can cause some types of paint to separate. If the paint is thawed, it often cannot be remixed back together.

Paint that is not reused eventually ends up in the City landfill. The lids are removed to allow it to evaporate and harden. Once it is no longer liquid, then it is discarded.



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This is not a perfect solution as paint is still going into the landfill. There is a possibility of groundwater contamination should leachate occur.

This is why it is important to buy only the amount of paint that is needed. And use all that is bought.

If there is any left over, see if a friend or neighbour can use it. As a last resort, take it to the landfill paint exchange area.

Paint cans that are empty should be disposed of with household garbage.

The household hazardous waste collection days are an initiative of the City of Whitehorse, with support from the Yukon Territorial Government.

For more information on household hazardous waste contact either the City Environmental Coordinator at 668-8312 or Raven Recycling at 667-7269.

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