

Mobile Device Recycling

Carriers, device manufacturers, app developers and the rest of the wireless ecosystem are constantly competing for every single customer by developing new products and services, and U.S. consumers win from this hypercompetitive environment. However, since these new devices are frequently launched in the U.S., this means consumers are changing their handsets often. But what happens to the “old” handset?

Wireless phones and their accessories are recyclable. By taking those old phones and equipment out of their kitchen drawers, consumers can help our environment, assist a charity or perhaps get some cash. CTIA-The Wireless Association® and the wireless industry began educating consumers about recycling their phones and accessories with the 2003 national recycling campaign “Wireless...The New Recyclable” (<http://www.recyclewirelessphones.com/>).

This effort continues to pay off today. According to a spring 2009 CTIA survey, more than two-thirds of Americans were aware that their mobile devices and accessories were recyclable and the same percentage was aware that the industry supports recycling programs. As part of their recycling commitment, carriers allow consumers to bring their old devices and accessories to the providers’ retail outlets for appropriate recycling. Many manufacturers also provide free shipping materials in new device packaging for consumers to responsibly retire their old devices.

Other wireless product recycling practices include:

- Wireless manufacturers have developed eco-friendly devices and accessories such as carbon neutral phones and solar-powered handsets and chargers.
 - They are also improving the design of wireless devices and packaging to be more lightweight and environmentally-friendly.
 - The use of substances such as lead and cadmium are being phased out of devices while increasing the use of recycled materials. In fact, the new generations of wireless devices currently weigh approximately 79g; this is 42 percent less than earlier models.
- The wireless industry supports a “One-Charger-Fits-All” Universal Charger Solution (UCS) and streamlined input/output features for mobile devices to reduce energy consumption & consumer costs.
 - In 2009, the wireless industry committed to supporting a UCS solution for new wireless devices as of January 1, 2012.
 - The UCS will provide an estimated 50% reduction in standby energy consumption.
 - The Micro-USB format is the common universal charging interface and energy efficient chargers in compliance with the U.S. “Energy Star” requirements will be used for external power adapters.
 - the wireless industry supports simplifying the input/output features for new wireless devices introduced to the market after January 2012 to streamline and reduce the number of audio and data connectors for mobile devices.

The wireless industry recognizes its responsibility to our environment for the health of the planet and future generations. We look forward to continuing to work with all interested parties on green initiatives to protect and positively affect the environment.

To learn more about the wireless industry’s commitment to reducing its carbon economy impact, please visit: http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/policy_topics/