

NYC's New E-Cycling Program Takes Hazards Out of the Waste Stream

By Thomas Usztoke, Douglas Elliman Property Management



Even though many New Yorkers are still not aware of it, a full ban on the disposal of electronics went into effect on January 1, 2015. The grace period for avoiding fines of \$100 per violation is about to end, so building owners and boards had better be sure that their buildings are enrolled in the program and their residents and staff are up to date on the newest recycling regulations.

The New Recycling Law

The new law was actually enacted by Governor Cuomo in 2010, with the passage of the NYS Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act, and is overseen by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The law went into effect in stages, with the final stage being the January 1 statewide ban on the disposal of electronics, except through acceptable recycling avenues.

Much of the onus and cost of disposal has been placed on the manufacturers of these electronics, which range from televisions, computers and fax machines to VCRs, DVD players, cable boxes and video game consoles. Got a closet full of outdated electronics? Now you can bring them back to any number of stores and recycling centers for environmentally, politically, and governmentally correct disposal. Or if you live in a New York City apartment building, your property may be eligible for pick-up service. According to the city's website, data on electronic devices will be fully erased by e-cycleNYC as part of the recycling process if you live in an eligible building. Properties of ten units or more can enroll in the city's e-cycleNYC program, which will allow building staff to receive training in how to collect and safely store electronics, and how to arrange for free pick-up by the Sanitation Department.

Buildings of ten or more units are entitled to free "room clean-out" service under the "e-cycleNYC" program. These buildings can collect and store unwanted electronics and arrange for pick-up by calling 212-437-4647 or emailing e-cycleNYC@dsny.nyc.gov. Pick-up is guaranteed within five business days.

Enrolled buildings of 50 or more units will be provided with a locked storage bin in which to collect electronics for pick-up within three business days of contacting the e-cycle program. Buildings with 250 or more units can contact the city to schedule e-cycleNYC events on the premises, and inform residents of when and where to bring their electronics for pick-up.

What and How to Recycle

To ensure the program's successful launch within our portfo-

lio of buildings, Douglas Elliman Property Management recently presented all of our managers with a Department of Sanitation certification course at one of our in-house monthly management seminars. We have also been encouraging resident managers and superintendents at our managed buildings to participate in the training and certification programs offered by the Department of Sanitation. In addition, written materials have been circulated among building residents announcing the e-cycling initiative and we will continue to remind and encourage all residents to follow the new protocols for electronics recycling. Due to these efforts, we expect DEPM-managed buildings to be well situated as early adapters to these initiatives, which promote not only healthier neighborhoods, but a healthier global community.

As part of the new program, the City will pick up large electronic devices including TVs, VCRs, DVRs, DVDs, cable and satellite boxes, video game consoles, computers and peripherals such as hard drives and keyboards, printers, scanners, fax machines. They will also pick up small devices such as tablets, mobile phones, MP3 players, and iPods.

Americans dispose of about 400 million electronic devices every year, adding a huge volume along with a wide range of toxins to the waste stream. According to Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner of the NYC Sanitation Department, electronic equipment has become the fastest-growing component of the hazardous waste stream. "By recycling electronics, New Yorkers can help decrease disposal costs and protect the environment," she said in a statement about the new law.

In addition to the e-cycleNYC pick-up programs, other recycling options for New Yorkers throughout the state include retail drop-off locations at Goodwill, the Salvation Army, Best Buy, Staples, or the Gowanus E-Waste Warehouse in Brooklyn. The City also has scheduled SAFE (solvents, automotive, flammables and electronics) Disposal Events throughout the five boroughs. For 2015 dates visit bit.ly/SAFEdisposal. Visit nyc.gov/stuffexchange for more information about selling or donating electronics that are still working, and nyc.gov/electronics for more information about the new electronics recycling regulations.

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