

# [Toner Cartridge Recycling – why and how!](#)

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Many offices choose to recycle their empty cartridges, which we recommend and support. When toner cartridges are empty and the time to dispose them arrives, many organizations question “how” and “where” to do this responsibly. It is a very simple process that is environmentally friendly.

## **BENEFITS OF RECYCLING TONER CARTRIDGES**

Recycling in general is a great practice that allows individuals and organizations alike to contribute positively to our communities and environment. Developing a recycling protocol for your organization to use for toner cartridge disposal will ensure your company is doing its part for the environment and often includes some cost-saving incentives.

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY BENEFITS**

Most people don't know the difference they make (or could make) by recycling. Here are some facts provided by [Cartridge World](#) that underline the importance of recycling toner cartridges:

- It takes one gallon of oil to make a new laser cartridge
- Nearly eight cartridges are thrown away per second in the United States alone

- About 70 percent of used printer cartridges are currently being thrown out
- Over 75 percent of waste is recyclable, but we only recycle about 30 percent of it
- A laser cartridge thrown into a landfill can take up to 450 years to decompose...some components take over 1,000 years
- In one year, if the world's discarded cartridges were stacked end-to-end, they would circle the earth over three times

“Currently, only around 30% of all cartridges are recycled,” according to [1-800-RECYCLING.com](https://www.1-800-RECYCLING.com). There is still great opportunity for people and organizations to participate in recycling toner cartridges and many companies offer recycling programs with cost saving incentives to motivate you to do so.

## COST-SAVING BENEFITS

Many toner cartridge recycling programs are designed to be very simple, as well as free. Ask your print provider if they offer or recommend any recycling services. Here are some examples of companies that offer rewards or incentives for recycled toner cartridges:

- [Office Depot](#): If you recycle at the store and are an Office Depot Rewards™ member you can earn points. They also offer benefits for schools; schools can recycle cartridges in exchange for free supplies. Plus, all shipping and recycling supplies are free.
- [Staples](#): Recycling with Staples results in \$2 of Staples Rewards® per cartridge that can be used toward replacement cartridges or other supplies.
- [Cartridge World®](#): They offer a program for organizations and schools to raise funds. Cartridge World will provide the supplies for recycling and write a check for what is recycled.
- [Manufacturers](#): Most print cartridge manufacturers have their own recycling program, unique to their supplies.

## HOW TO RECYCLE YOUR EMPTY TONER CARTRIDGES

Recycling toner cartridges is very straightforward; each alternative available has a unique process. Bringing your empty cartridges into an office supply store

involves little to no prep time. All you have to do is bring your cartridges to the customer service desk, unless otherwise advised, and they will walk you through the return process.

Other recycling programs may send you a recycling container that, when full, you will simply need to notify them and they will pick up your recycled material.

Finally, most toner cartridges have recycling instructions on their original packaging. Typically it involves packaging your empty toner cartridges into provided plastic bags or shipping envelopes and applying a pre-addressed, pre-postmarked label. If these aren't provided in the original packaging, you can usually request these supplies online.

Before going through any of the above processes, talk to your print provider. It is very likely they have a program in place that makes it even easier for you; they may handle the entire recycling process for you, making it simple and easy.

<https://www.marconet.com/blog/bid/335627/the-importance-of-recycling-your-empty-toner-cartridges>

## What Happens To Recycled Printer Cartridges?

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So you've made the decision to recycle your old used ink cartridges, but do you know what actually happens to them once you've dropped them off with the recycling company?

It's a fascinating process which not many people know about – but it helps clear acres of valuable space in landfill each year. Additionally, by recycling your used printer cartridges you're saving the lives of many animals, reducing the emission of dangerous greenhouse gases and preventing the contamination of toxic chemicals which can leak into soil surrounding landfills and cause harm to humans and wildlife. Are you interested in knowing what happens to your cartridges and how they are used in the world around you? Take a look at the advice from [Cartridges Direct](#) to find out more:

### Transportation

Regular pick-ups are made at your drop off station (stores including Harvey Normal, Office Depot or your local Australia Post if you choose to recycle using the Planet for Ark or Close the Loop schemes). Lorries arrive and take containers full of cartridges to a nearby recycling plant which is able to process them. Not all recycling plants can do this as it is a

specific process – and there are even some factories (like Close the Loop’s specialist plant) dedicated only to sorting and dismantling ink cartridges.

## Sorting out



Once the cartridges arrive at the plant, they are sorted into piles by hand depending on what type and make they are. Different manufacturers have slightly different ways of making their cartridges and sometimes they use different materials, so the recycling plant will factor this in when making sure that they can make use of the whole of the cartridge effectively. Some manufacturers have their very own recycling plants to process their cartridges specifically, as they then personally re-use the materials to make new ones. In this case, the cartridges are sent back to them so that they can separately process and recycle them in-house.

## Breaking down

Once sorted into groups, the cartridges are then broken down accordingly for their useful parts. This is a job often carried out by clever machinery (like Close the Loop’s ‘Green Machine’) – which separates each usable element from the cartridge ready to be recycled.

## Sending off

Now the parts have been properly sorted and separated, they can be sent off to be processed – or processed in-house if the plant has the capability. Depending on your area

these can be sent to different plants – but if you use the Planet for Ark scheme they will be sent to their partner Close the Loop's specialist unit for the final stages of their journey.

## **Making something new**

Now the individual parts of your old ink cartridge are ready to be made into something new. The plastic will be sent to a processing plant where it will be melted down ready to be incorporated into a wide range of products – not just ink cartridges. You can often find pens, mouse mats, disposable cups and pencil cases made from recycled plastics, too. The remaining toner in the cartridge is actually used in an innovative paving product called TonerPave. The metal parts will also be processed and used again. Any other remaining parts are processed together and used to create something called 'eWood', a synthetic timber which can be used just as natural wood can for a range of projects such as furniture, sheds and fencing products.

If you'd like to learn more about how you can do your bit for the environment with Planet for Ark and Close the Loop, or purchasing ink cartridges from an environmentally friendly source, then take a look at Cartridges Dire

<https://www.techwalls.com/what-happens-to-recycled-printer-cartridges/>