

## About E-Waste

The newest generation of computers, handheld devices, cell phones, gaming systems, flat screen televisions, and other electronics are being produced and sold in ever increasing numbers. Rapid improvements in technology, changes in media, falling prices, and planned obsolescence have resulted in a fast-growing surplus of electronic waste. As a result, the electronics sector is generating a growing stream of used and discarded electronics, called E-Waste.

E-Waste is electronic devices that are outdated, broken, or otherwise ready for end-of-life management. **The United States leads the world in producing electronic waste, discarding about 3 million tons annually.**

## Proper Disposal

Disposing of E-Waste by putting it into landfills along with other trash and garbage is neither safe nor smart. There are several options available when disposing of E-Waste. If the electronic device is still usable, donating it to a charitable organization is a good option. However, if the electronic device no longer works, is outdated or otherwise not usable, taking it to a reputable business or recycling center that will properly dispose of it is the responsible option. It is important to utilize only those businesses which can demonstrate that they correctly handle E-Waste.

Television and computer monitors require special handling for disposal. If the screens are broken or cracked, they must be taken to a local Household Hazardous Waste Day event, held annually in Jefferson County.

Jefferson County, along with other organizations, host annual electronic take back day events. There are no fees to attend these events. Electronics are also accepted at the annual HHW Day event, visit [jcca.org](http://jcca.org) for a schedule of events.

## Hazards of E-Waste

Most E-Waste contains dangerous chemicals and heavy metals which can pollute water and land if not disposed of correctly. In the United States, an estimated 70% of heavy metals in landfills comes from discarded electronics. These heavy metals, which include lead, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic, can leach from landfills into the water table and pollute groundwater. Groundwater feeds springs and streams, which in turn flow into rivers and lakes.



Dangerous chemicals from E-Waste can pollute land and water if disposed of improperly.

E-Waste also contains as many as 60 elements, including valuable gold, platinum, and columbite-tantalites (commonly known as tantalite). These elements are not renewable, and recycling electronic devices provides opportunities for materials recovery, resource conservation and less destruction to critical wildlife habitat from the effect of mining for the items.

Please consider properly disposing of your E-Waste at the next Electronics Take Back Days held in Jefferson County.



## Protecting Water Quality

The Clean Water Act (CWA) and its amendments were passed to protect the health and safety of Americans. These laws require that population centers within the United States implement a program to reduce stormwater polluted runoff. These mandated but unfunded requirements are regulated and enforced by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and all 50 states are required to comply.

In Alabama, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) administers and enforces the CWA under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit program. ADEM issues Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES Permits to local governments required to implement a stormwater pollution prevention program.

Jefferson County is responsible for implementing and enforcing the requirements of its MS4 NPDES Permit.

The Jefferson County staff performs the following activities required by the NPDES Permit:

- Waterway testing and monitoring
- Water quality data collection and interpretation
- Water pollution reporting hotline
- Construction site permitting and inspection
- Complaint investigation
- Public education and outreach

# JeffCo H<sub>2</sub>O

*Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution!*

**Report suspected water pollution.  
Call the Complaint Hotline:  
205.325.8741**

## How You Can Help

Pollution from stormwater runoff could be significantly reduced if everyone in our region would do just a few easy things to prevent its causes. Your part might seem small, but every little bit makes a significant difference!

- Recycling E-Waste is easy and free.
- Keep vehicle fluids, yard debris, litter, and other materials out of the storm drain system
- Read and follow the package label directions when using yard chemicals or household cleaners. Only use the amount you really need to save money.
- Fix or repair leaks on your vehicles and other equipment. Collect and recycle used oil.
- Properly dispose of or donate old paint.
- Pick up pet waste and discard in the trash.
- Capture rainwater from your roof or downspouts for watering the lawn and inedible plants.
- Secure your loads when transporting items or materials before driving on roadways.
- Participate in Household Hazardous Waste Days to properly dispose of old cleaners, solvents, batteries, paint, and other chemical waste.
- Schedule an educational program for your organization, event, or neighborhood association. Call 205-325.8741.

### Water Pollution

Complaint Hotline: 205-325.5792

Report suspected water pollution.  
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**Keep It Clean JeffCo!**  
*Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution!*

**Roads and Transportation Department  
Stormwater Program**  
Room A-200  
Jefferson County Courthouse Annex  
716 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd North  
Birmingham, AL 35203

## Trashing Electronics Doesn't Compute



### Jefferson County Stormwater Program

#### Roads and Transportation Department

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