



## Federal Electronic Waste Strategy

The federal e-waste strategy was launched in February 2010 by Public Works and Government Services Canada. The strategy was put in place to ensure that federal e-waste does not contribute to the global issue of improper e-waste disposal and the associated negative impacts on human health, environment and information security. The Government of Canada disposes of a broad range of electronic and electrical equipment. For fiscal year 2011-2012 federal government spending in this area was estimated to be \$1.2B and included computer, laboratory, medical, security, telecomm, audio-visual, and office equipment.<sup>1</sup>

The strategy emphasizes reuse first, leverages existing disposal mechanisms and recognizes industry initiatives in order to provide for the environmentally sound and secure recycling of all federal surplus electronic and electrical equipment. [The Guideline for the Disposal of Federal Surplus Electronic and Electrical Equipment](#) was developed to articulate the strategy and direct the appropriate execution of the e-waste disposal process in a manner consistent with the [Treasury Board Directive on Disposal of Surplus Materiel](#) and the [Policy on Government Security](#).

## Definition of E-waste

The Government of Canada defines e-waste as *'surplus electronic and electrical equipment that is not suitable for reuse'*. Electronic and electrical equipment includes *'any equipment with a plug, battery or that uses electricity to perform its intended function'* excluding vehicles and vehicle parts. Electronic assets are considered surplus when they have reached the end of their intended useful life and can no longer be reallocated within a department.

## Overview Disposal Mechanisms

The Treasury Board [Directive on the Disposal of Surplus Materiel](#) requires that surplus electronic assets be disposed of through the following mechanisms, in order of priority:

### 1) Reuse

Reuse extends the useful life of an asset, maximizing its overall value and delaying the consumption of raw materials and energy to produce new assets. In order of preference, reuse options are:

- a) [Computers for Schools \(CFS\)](#) – Qualifying equipment is refurbished for reuse.
- b) [Crown Assets Distribution \(CAD\)](#) – Equipment in working condition can be sold for reuse.
- c) Gratuitous transfer to other federal organizations or donation to other recognized charitable/non-profit organizations.

### 2) Environmentally Sound and Secure Recycling

Recycling electronic and electrical equipment according to the principle of environmentally sound management helps to protect the environment and human health while leading to economic benefit through resource recovery. In order of preference, recycling options are:

- a) [Provincial Extended Producer Responsibility Programs](#) – Qualifying equipment can be sent for recycling if it cannot be reused (see links to provincial extended producer responsibility programs).
- b) Standing Offer for E-waste Recycling Services – E-waste that cannot be reused and does not qualify for provincial programs can be recycled via the [National Master Standing Offer for e-waste recycling services](#).

<sup>1</sup> Spend Cube has collected roughly 87% of Government of Canada spend.

## Key Considerations: Accessing Disposal Mechanisms

### Security of Government Information

In accordance with the [Policy on Government Security](#), federal departments and agencies are responsible for protecting their assets and information in order to ensure the continued delivery of services that contribute to the health, safety economic well-being and security of Canadians.

### Triage

Departments and agencies are responsible for identifying and accessing the most appropriate disposal mechanism for surplus electronic and electrical equipment in manner that is consistent with the [Treasury Board Directive on Disposal of Surplus Materiel](#). The Directive emphasizes reuse as the preferred method of disposal and requires that departments and agencies offer the right of first refusal to Computers for Schools for IT and related equipment.

### Packaging

When disposing of surplus electronic and electrical equipment, federal departments and agencies must ensure that proper packaging methods are used. Equipment that is properly packaged is easy to identify, move, load and is unlikely to be refused by transporters. At no time should federal e-waste be shipped via unsecure bulk transport e.g. not packaged in any way and loaded directly into trucks.

### Transportation

Transportation methods vary according to the disposal mechanism being accessed, location, quantity or sensitivity of information contained within materiel. Transportation may be coordinated by the recipient of federal materiel or by the department or agency conducting the disposal. Typically, departments and agencies either have pre-existing arrangements with transportation companies or use Public Works and Government Services Canada's [National Master Standing Offers for Freight Services](#). In addition, care should also be taken to ensure that [security requirements related to the transportation](#) of items containing sensitive information are met.

### Reporting and Performance Measurement

#### Disposal Records and Reporting

It is the responsibility of federal departments and agencies to maintain an up-to-date asset management and financial system, in order to be able to respond to any reporting requirements regarding the disposal of surplus electronic and electrical equipment (e.g. # units and/or weight).

#### Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

The federal e-waste disposal strategy is applicable to all federal organizations. In addition, the environmentally sound disposal of e-waste is a key target area in Theme IV of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy. Departments and agencies that are bound by the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy are required to implement the strategy and report on their progress. Additional information on reporting requirements for participating organizations can be found on the Office of Greening Government Operations' [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy site](#).