

JOHN M. RABE, P.E.
Director

www.winnebago-county-solid-waste.com
solidwaste@winnebago-county-wi.gov



LANDFILL/ADMINISTRATION
100 W. COUNTY RD. Y
OSHKOSH, WI 54901

PHONE (920) 232-1800
FAX (920) 424-1189


Winnebago County

Solid Waste Management Board

The Wave of the Future

DATE: June 12, 2023

TO: Contracted Responsible Units

FROM: Kathy Hutter – Operations Manager
khutter@winnebago-county-wi.gov 920-232-1853 

RE: May 2023 Signing Municipality Update & Monthly Scale Reports

Managing Used Batteries – In recent weeks two Wisconsin Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) (Columbia County and City of Milwaukee) experienced significant fire incidents that resulted in extended downtime. We also had two fire related close-calls at the Tri-County MRF in early June and two fire related close-calls at our Winnebago County Transfer Station in April/May. While it hasn't been determined that batteries caused these fires in all of the cases, in some of the cases they were identified as the ignition source. Rechargeable batteries, particularly those labeled Li-ion, Ni-Cd, Ni-MH and SSLA often contain a charge after they are no longer useable. When placed in traditional waste and recycling streams, these batteries can become damaged, and discharge their remaining energy as heat, an explosion or high temperature fire. The fire spreads quickly in a waste/recycling environment, can become extremely difficult to extinguish and may create a significant amount of property damage/downtime at processing facilities. This has become a widespread issue, which has prompted the WI DNR to issue a June 9, 2023 Press Release to bring the topic front and center (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/78001>). With this Press Release and the resources it contains, we are encouraging you to help us get the message out to our citizens regarding the danger of putting rechargeable batteries in waste and recycling bins and the proper methods for safe disposal.

Jessica's Junkyard Journal - Waste & Recycling Worker's Week is celebrated every year during the week of June 17th. This year, Winnebago County Solid Waste's social media will feature our own Municipal and County Solid Waste & Recycling personnel! Visit <https://wasterecyclingworkersweek.org/> for more information and resources, then stay tuned and share our highlights on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter later this month.

The WDNR Recycling Consolidation Grant 2024 Cooperative Agreement - will be delivered to your office in a separate mailing during the week of June 12th (City of Neenah, City of Oshkosh excluded). Please complete and return the Agreement by August 18th.

KH/kh

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