Environmental Programs

Waste management

A company's business model directly impacts the amount of waste it generates. Generally speaking, companies with greater vertical integration are responsible for a more significant proportion of their activities' waste.

Unlike other telecommunications companies, our installation and construction are integrated functions, so we manage our network waste ourselves. Outsourcing such functions would allow us to reduce our waste-to-landfill results, but we would not be able to maintain direct control over functions that directly impact customer service and operations.

To minimize the amount of waste sent to landfill, Bell runs several programs to reduce, reuse, recycle or use as fossil fuel substitutes the products and materials required to operate our business.

Waste from offices

Seven years ago, we began our Sort-It program, which encourages employees to sort their waste at central stations by separating paper, cardboard, glass, steel, aluminum and organic matter. 15 sites now offer this program, representing 65% of office employees. In 2016, we plan to add 25 more buildings.

Bell's reuse and recycling programs also address residual materials such as electronic waste, toner cartridges and office furniture We also recovered 2,936 tonnes of customer-facing products in 2015, including TV receivers, mobile phones and accessories.

In 2015, office waste represented 24% of all waste produced at Bell

- We collected 6,036 tonnes of material from office operations, 61% of which (3,660 tonnes) was diverted from landfill, up from 54% a year ago
- We reused and recycled 70 tonnes of computers and peripherals, and 7 tonnes of toner cartridges

Waste from operations (Field, Fleet and Network)

Bell has been recovering residual materials from operations for more than 3 decades. Telecommunications cable, terminals, utility poles, cable reels, wood pallets, lead-acid batteries and some hazardous materials produced by Field, Fleet and Network activities are reused and recycled.

In 2015, operational waste represented 65% of all waste produced at Bell. We collected 16,404 tonnes of material, 11,586 tonnes (71%) of which were diverted from landfill. This waste breaks down as follows:

- 500 tonnes come from our fleet vehicles, including tires, batteries, oil and filters, used engine antifreeze, and cleaning solvents. We divert 100% of this from landfill
- 1086 tonnes are hazardous materials, such as lead-acid batteries, alkaline batteries, fluorescent tubes, oily containers, contaminated rags and absorbents, aerosols and other pressurized

containers, paints, solvents, and glues. These materials are managed under centralized or local programs and are 100% diverted from landfill

- 1008 tonnes are packaging products for network equipment, such as wood pallets, cardboard boxes and plastic wrap. Of this, 81% is reused or recycled
- 13,811 tonnes are hardware telecom materials, such as cables, terminals, utility poles and cable reels, 67% of which is reused or recycled.

We support the Centre de formation en entreprise et récupération (CFER), a school that teaches useful skills in recovery and refurbishing to young people without a secondary school education. CFER collects and sorts recyclable materials generated at 15 of our work centres in Québec.

Hazardous Residual Materials (HRMs)

Objectives of hazardous waste management program

- Minimize the purchase of hazardous materials
- Recover all hazardous materials used in Bell's operations
- Minimize the landfilling and the incineration of hazardous materials by maximizing reuse, recycling and energy recovery
- Ensure the transportation of residual dangerous goods complies with regulations
- Maintain all required documentation with regard to the shipping of hazardous materials
- Have comprehensive information on the hazardous material inventories at the recovery centre and be able to effectively communicate this information
- Ensure the proper management of batteries owned or serviced by Bell and removed from client premises.

By law, some residual materials are defined as hazardous, because they may be a threat to human health or the environment. Federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations strictly regulate the management of these hazardous materials, especially when stored, transported or sent for disposal. When these materials are not disposed of properly, contaminants can enter the atmosphere or migrate through the soil and pollute groundwater, affecting drinking water quality.

Bell collects hazardous materials generated by its operations and manages them according to the most rigorous standards. Some materials are recovered and managed centrally, including batteries, small non-spillable batteries, oily containers, contaminated rags and absorbents, aerosols and other pressurized containers, paints, solvents, and glues. The special bins used to collect these hazardous materials are sent to the Hazardous Materials Recovery Centre (HMRC) in Laval, Québec. At this site, we sort and store the materials before returning them to stock, recycling them or sending them for safe disposal.

In some cases, materials generated from Bell's operations are managed locally, such as at work centres, at switching centre, and in Bell stores. In such cases, the local site deals with transportation, recycling and disposal suppliers directly, and ensures these materials are properly managed with the help of the Corporate Responsibility and Environment team. Federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations regulate each step of local HRM management.

To minimize our environmental impact, we promote efficient use of potentially dangerous products. This not only results in less waste but also saves money. In addition, we reduce our financial impact on the company by procuring cost-effective products. To achieve this, Bell has implemented an evaluation process for new “controlled” products.

The Corporate Responsibility and Environment team continually gathers information on new products to be introduced into company operations, assessing them based on best operational practices and environmental impact.