



Article Side

Toner Cartridges-Where Do Yours End Up? by [Alex](#)

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Every year Canadians throw out 35 million printer cartridges with a 12 percent annual increase. That is more than 1 cartridge per second! Many don't realize it, but cartridges take 450 years to decompose. Each brand new toner cartridge requires the burning of over 2 quarts of petroleum in the manufacturing process.

In North America alone, more than 200 million liters of petroleum are used to sustain the production of new toner cartridges with the majority of these cartridges ending up in the world's landfills once empty.

Each year, suppliers such as HP, Lexmark and Xerox produce and distribute millions of supplies for printers, copiers and plotters. These providers of printing solutions and the ongoing stream of consumables & supplies have a unique environmental responsibility.

By recycling printer cartridges, we conserve natural resources and energy by reducing the need for virgin materials. Up to 97 percent of the materials that make up a printer cartridge can be recycled or reused if taken care of. Recycling one color copier cartridge saves 3.5 pounds of solid waste.

Most have several convenient return options and service to recover and reuse or recycle spent toner cartridges. The result is less solid waste and fewer resources consumed. Collection programs are usually free to the consumer and are designed to be easy to use. Compatible or replacement toner cartridges are not always the best environmental answer as ninety-four percent of remanufactured cartridges sold will ultimately be thrown away.

All HP toner and ink cartridges recycled through HP Planet Partners go through a multi-phase recycling process where they are reduced to raw materials that can then be used to make new metal and plastic products such as HP cartridges, auto parts, roof tiles, microchip processing trays and parts of some HP products, or they are recovered for energy. If you laid all the HP LaserJet print cartridges that have been returned and recycled through HP Planet Partners end-to-end along the equator, they would circle the earth 1.21 times.

Lexmark strives to be an environmentally responsible provider of products and services. From the way they design with the environment in mind, to how they engineer their packaging to reduce materials, all the way to the collection programs Lexmark provides an environmentally progressive approach to recycling.

Xerox, through their Green World Alliance collection/reuse/recycling program for spent imaging supplies, customers return more than 2.5 million cartridges and toner containers annually. Over the last 20 years, our supplies recycling programs have kept more than 145 million pounds of waste out of landfills.

Remanufactured doesn't necessarily mean environmentally friendly. Remanufactured or refilled products are very likely to still end up in the landfill. The best way to avoid this is to ask questions and see if your supplier can provide details about their environmental programs and practices.

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