



Donaldson Filtration products are ideally suited to Africa's challenging environments. Whether it's transport, agriculture & mining, industrial air quality, or specialised filtration media...



HOME | BREAKING NEWS | SECTOR NEWS | MULTIMEDIA | MAGAZINE | ABOUT US |

7th August 2009 | videoclips | audioclips | podcasts | image gallery

Agriculture | Automotive | Chemicals | Competition Policy | Construction | Defence | Economy | Electricity | Energy | Engineering & Manufacturing | Environment | Metals | Science Technology | ICT |

Climate Change | Environmental Studies | Policy & Enforcement | Waste Management & Recycling
Advertisers' Catalogue & Product Listing | Electra Mining | Company Announcements | Careers | iPhone

Advanced Search | Subscribe | Free Daily Email | Subscriber Login | RSS

SEARCH POWERED BY GOLD 962.01 \$/oz ▼ PLATINUM 1242.50 \$/oz ▼ R/\$ exchange 8.14 ▼ R/€ exchange 11.69 ▼

HOME SECTOR NEWS ENVIRONMENT WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING

SHARE



GAGDET GARBAGE Harmful, potentially lethal chemicals reside in electronic waste (wikipedia commons)

RELATED ARTICLES

ARTICLES | AUDIO | VIDEO



No related articles No related articles

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTION

Association urges proper disposal of 'harmful' electronic waste

0 COMMENTS | [ADD A COMMENT](#) | [EMAIL](#) | [PRINT](#)

By: **Darren Parker**
7th August 2009

TEXT SIZE

The Institute of Waste Management Southern Africa (IWMSA) has called on consumers and business regarding the proper disposal of electronic waste (ewaste).

"Every time one disposes of a light bulb, flat battery, microwave or even an old television set, harmful poisons and chemicals are passed on to someone else. People normally crush up the waste for disposal at landfill sites. This old way of disposing of waste leaks poisons into the earth and water tables, which, in a cycle, always come back in various forms that we ingest, be it through water or air," says IWMSA president **Vincent Charnley**.

Ewaste contains metals, many of which are toxic and classed as hazardous. The most common of these are lead, mercury, cadmium and arsenic, but there are many more that are abundant, Charnley explains.

All modern liquid crystal display (LCD) and plasma screens are produced by using nitrogen trifluoride, which is a potent greenhouse gas. LCD monitors use fluorescent lamps to back-light the screen, while the circuit boards used to run the equipment also contain poisonous metals.

Lead, found in old television screens, batteries and circuit boards, can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, comas or even death, he says. In young people, it can also cause nerve, blood and brain disorders.

The mercury from fluorescent lamps and light emitting diodes has been linked to brain and liver damage. Cadmium is typically found in recharge-able batteries, old television screens and monitors, and even in printer ink and toner cartridges. Cadmium damages the kidneys and lungs, and may also be linked to osteoporosis. Further, arsenic is linked to skin disease and nerve damage, as well as lung cancer in some cases of chronic exposure.

"Years ago, asbestos was a silent killer, and when educated about its effects, the global community reacted and diminished its use, and started plans to remove it from buildings and clothing. "It is taken for granted that everyday electronic goods are there to make our lives easier, but people are not aware of all the dangers that lurk inside," Charnley says.

The e-Waste Association of South Africa, a nonprofit organisation, is a platform for the recycling of electrical and electronic waste in South Africa. Companies can apply to become members of the association to ensure that their old electronic equipment will be disposed of in an environment-friendly way, he says.

Further, some organisations, such as retailers Pick n Pay and Woolworths, have already introduced drop-off points at most of their stores across the country. Under this arrangement, the public is encouraged to take used bulbs and batteries to a local Pick n Pay or Woolworths store, where the waste is properly disposed of through various waste management partners.

"What we now know can save us in the future, but we need to have greater preventive maintenance now instead of having to find a cure later on," Charnley concludes.

Edited by: **Martin Zhuwakinyu**

· Ads by Google

[Herbal Detox](#)

TOPICS IN THIS ARTICLE

Company	Country	Industry Term	Medical Condition
Pay Woolworths	South Africa	Chemicals Potent Greenhouse Gas	Brain Disorders Comas Lung Cancer Osteoporosis Skin Disease