



**BEST**

Better Environmental  
Sustainability Targets

# Occupational Knowledge International Facts on Environmental Impacts of Lead Batteries



Aside from exhaust pipe emissions, lead batteries have the most detrimental environmental impact of any automobile part. Every car made today contains approximately 15 kilos of lead - most of which is in the battery. Lead batteries are also widely used for forklifts, golf carts, and for backup power in UPS devices and for the telecommunications industry.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 120 million people are over exposed to lead (approximately three times the number infected by HIV/AIDS) and 99 percent of the most severely affected are in the developing world.
- Over three-fourths of all lead production goes into batteries.
- Lead poisoning adversely affects almost every organ system in the human body.

## **WHY DO LEAD BATTERIES HAVE SUCH A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT?**

- The manufacturing of lead batteries is associated with significant lead emissions;
- Improper recycling of lead batteries contaminates the environment and causes significant lead poisoning among workers and in surrounding communities.

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD EXPOSURE?**

- Damages the brain and neurological system;
- Decreases IQ scores and causes hyperactive and violent behavior in children;
- Damages kidneys, liver, reproductive and blood forming systems;
- Low levels contribute to high blood pressure in adults; and
- Very high exposures can cause coma and/or death.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH USED LEAD BATTERIES?**

By law all dealer locations where you purchase batteries must take back your used lead battery and ensure that they are shipped to registered recycling facilities. When purchasing a new battery you will be offered a discount based on the value of the lead in the used battery to encourage returns. It is important that you do not sell or give your used lead-acid batteries to street recyclers or any other unauthorized locations.

## **CAN I BUY BATTERIES THAT ARE BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?**

OK International is launching the Better Environmental Sustainability Targets (BEST) Standard for lead battery manufactures. The BEST eco-label will appear on lead batteries from manufacturers who meet strict environmental performance standards and agree to take back used batteries for environmentally sound recycling.

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- Information on lead poisoning prevention and BEST Standard: [www.okinternational.org](http://www.okinternational.org)
- Lead Battery Handling Rules: <http://envfor.nic.in/legis/hsm/leadbat.html>
- List of Registered Recyclers: <http://www.cpcb.nic.in/oldwebsite/Hazardous/list-recyclersa.htm>