



A Program with the
Colorado Attorney General
and the AARP Foundation



Colorado Attorney General
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Better Business Bureau
serving Colorado



Disposing of Your Old Cell Phone

Permanently Removing Personal and Sensitive Information

If you own a cell phone, at some point you're likely to upgrade to a newer model. But what should you do with your old phone? Options include recycling, reselling, and donating. Before you hang up your old phone for the last time, the Federal Trade Commission, the nation's consumer protection agency, wants you know how to dispose of it properly.

Permanent data deletion also may require you to clear data from the phone's contacts and other stored information. Your owner's manual, your wireless provider's website, or the manufacturer will likely provide information on how to permanently delete information from your mobile device (and even how to save or transfer information to a new device before deletion). Make sure that you have removed the following data: phone book, any lists of calls (received and made), voicemails, sent and received email and text messages, organizer folders, Web search history and photos.

Disposal Options- Once you have a "clean" phone, here are some options for disposing of it.

- **Recycling** – Cell phone manufacturers, service providers, and non-profit groups often have programs to refurbish mobile devices or recycle their components, including peripheral devices like chargers.

-The U.S. Postal Service's free "Mail Back" pilot program allows customers to recycle small electronics and inkjet cartridges. Some 1,500 Post Offices have free envelopes so you can mail back PDAs, cell phones, digital cameras, and music players without having to pay for postage. For more information, visit www.usps.gov.

- **Donating** – Many organizations collect old mobile devices for charitable purposes.
- **Reselling** – Some individuals and organizations will buy your old mobile devices. You can find names and addresses online.
- **Disposing** – Keep the environment in mind when disposing of mobile devices. Cell phones contain batteries, which should not be put in your trash because they will end up in landfills where they could be harmful. Many cell phones also contain heavy metals which can contaminate the earth. The EPA recommends that you check with your local health and sanitation agencies for the proper way to dispose of electronics safely.

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