Waste management

GRI 306-2

Diverting waste from landfill

Bell has integrated much of its installation and construction functions. This makes us accountable for managing a large part of 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 influence customer service and operations.

To minimize the amount of waste we send to landfill, Bell runs several programs to reduce, reuse, recycle or repurpose waste generated to operate our business.

Two new waste indicators and objectives

Over the last 5 years, the year-over-year comparability of our waste management data has been diminished by several factors, the most important of which is major strategic business acquisitions (e.g., Q9 Networks, Astral, Bell Aliant, BellMTS, AlarmForce, Axia). Recent analysis of how we report our waste management data has resulted in the adoption of 2 new indicators. We decided to take a step back in order to analyze our waste management data and rethink how we report it. This effort has resulted in implementation of two new indicators. Compared to the diversion rate objective we previously reported, our new objective does not overshadow reduction efforts at the source. This is important because many of our environmental initiatives focus on reduction at the source, such as reduced consumption of paper for administrative purposes and packaging. Furthermore, the formulation of this new objective has the advantage of being tangible for team members. Without action on the part of every team member, reducing waste in our offices would not be possible.

As a result, we are now reporting our progress on reaching and maintaining 55kg of waste sent to landfill per employee in Bell-owned or -leased administrative buildings by 2024.

In 2018, we sent an average of 85kg of waste to landfill per employee from administrative buildings.[i]

In addition to our administrative waste objective, we will begin reporting our progress toward our new objective of recovering and diverting to certified recyclers 100% of generated hazardous waste by 2024. Currently, we are diverting 100% of the hazardous materials we recover, including all of our network batteries and residual material from our fleet services. However, we have collection gaps in Atlantic Canada and Manitoba for aerosols, fluorescent tubes and paint. This difference is due to the recent integration of activities in these provinces. Even if certain items are not designated as hazardous waste in some of these provinces, we still aim to apply the high standard of our residual hazardous materials management program all across the country.

Although these categories of hazardous waste represent less than 3% of our total waste, we believe they should be recovered and diverted to certified recyclers. We aim to have collection services in all provinces by 2024.

Our new indicator illustrates the gap between generated and recovered hazardous waste.

In 2018, we were able to recover and divert to certified recyclers approximately 99% of all generated hazardous materials.[ii]

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[i] PwC provided limited assurance over this indicator. Please see PwC's assurance statement on our website.
[ii] Ibid.

Overall waste diversion performance

In 2018, we diverted 64% of waste from landfill.[iii] Waste from operations represented 62% of the total generated at Bell, while offices generated 30%, and the amount associated with customers represented 8%.

Of the operational waste generated, we diverted 60% from landfill. 65% generated in offices was diverted from landfill, and 100% of customer facing and hazardous waste is diverted from landfill every year.

We still face a challenge with fibre optic cable, which cannot be recycled or reused at this time. We continue to seek partners to explore ways to valorize this material.

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.

HAZARDOUS RESIDUAL MATERIALS (HRMS)

GRI 306-4

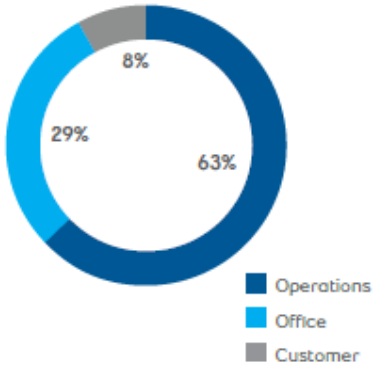
Objectives of hazardous waste management program

- 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

[iii] Ibid.

Overall waste

2018 (in %)



64%: Overall waste diverted from landfill[1]

Recovered waste

2018 (in tonnes)

	2018	% DIVERTED	CHANGE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
Operations			
Fleet[2]	508	100	–
Hazardous Materials[3]	1,320	100	–
Packaging products[4]	1,406	80	–
Hardware[5]	17,199	56	+5
Office	9,419	65	-2
Customers[6]	2,479	100	–

1 PwC provided limited assurance over this indicator. Please see PwC's assurance statement
2 Tires, batteries, oil and oil filters and used engine antifreeze
3 Lead-acid batteries, alkaline batteries, fluorescent tubes, oily containers, contaminated rags and absorbents, aerosols and other pressurized containers, paints, solvents, and glues
4 For network equipment, such as wood pallets, cardboard boxes and plastic wrap
5 Telecom materials, such as cables, terminals, utility poles and cable reels
6 TV receivers, modems, phones and accessories.

- 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.

Inform customers on proper disposal methods for batteries. 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 properly disposed of, contaminants can enter the atmosphere, migrate through the soil or even leach into groundwater

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 containers used to collect these hazardous materials are sent to the Hazardous Materials Recovery Centre 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 hazardous residual material management.

We promote efficient use of potentially dangerous products to minimize our environmental impact. In addition, we reduce our financial impact on the company by procuring cost-effective products. Bell has implemented an evaluation process for new "controlled" products to achieve this.

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.

Waste from offices

Bell's reuse and recycling programs also address residual materials such as electronic waste, toner cartridges and office furniture. In 2009, 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. 93 sites now offer this program, In 2019, we plan to add 4 more buildings.

Environmental stewardship for customer-facing electronic devices

GRI 301--3

SASB

Bell provides customers with programs to help them protect the environment by making it easier to recycle their products, including mobile phones, Bell Internet modems and Bell TV receivers. In 2018, thanks to our customers' participation in our recovery programs, Bell diverted more than 2,478 tonnes of electronics from landfill.

Customer-facing electronic waste collected

2018 (in tonnes)

ITEM	TONNES
TV receivers	1753
Modems	689
Mobile devices	34
Mobile phone batteries	1.5
Mobile phone accessories	1
Total	**2,478.5**

Bell recovers mobile phones through two complementary programs: the Bell Trade-in program and the Bell Blue Box program. Launched in 2003 and available at all Bell stores, Virgin Mobile stores and participating The Source locations, the Bell Blue Box program was the first cross-Canada collection program established by any company for re-using and recycling mobile phones. Bell donates the net proceeds from the Bell Blue Box program in support of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative.

In addition, Bell participates in provincial recycling programs for other electronic products, such as tablets, headsets, TVs, computers, and batteries. For more details on these programs, visit our website Bell.ca/recycling.

We also 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 16 of our work centres in Québec.

Recovery is difficult to predict and control, as it depends on the rate at which customers upgrade to newer devices. Often, recovery relates to economic activity: during economic downturns, people upgrade their devices and sign up for new plans less frequently. It is also dependent on customer behaviour. A 2017 CWTA/Recycle My Cell study reports that 62% of Canadians say they have cell phones in their possession that they are not using and are being stored.

Bell's customer-facing device recovery objective

We believe that we have an important role to play in the recovery of used electronic devices from customers given our close relationship with them. Last year, we began reporting on our progress toward our objective of recovering 10 million used TV receivers, modems, and mobile phones between January 1, 2016 and the end of 2020.

In 2018, we recovered 2,560,642 units.[iv] We have recovered 7,348,684 units since January 2016, and on target to meeting our 2020 objective.

The following table details the breakdown of how many of each type of device we have collected since January 2016.

Customer-facing electronic devices recovery

2016–2018 (amount of units collected)

	2018	2017	2016
TV receivers	**1,151,635**	1,268,793	1,103,220
Modems	**1,052,726**	1,051,270	945,715
Mobile phones	**356,281**	200,536	218,508
Total	**2,560,642**	2,520,599	2,267,443

[iv] Ibid.