

# Residual materials (waste) management

## 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; however, we would not be able to maintain direct control over functions that directly influence the customer experience and operations.

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

More recently, we have started to work on a circular economy strategy. Our goal is to create synergies between our environmental programs to allow positive value loops. For more information, please refer to the [Circular Economy](#) section at the end of this document.

### Overall waste diversion performance

Normally, we would present data related to overall waste in this section. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our operational and administrative activities has made the data related to our waste not comparable and, therefore, not meaningful. In early 2020 in particular, in compliance with Public Health requirements, business activities dramatically diminished as team members were asked to stay home. For many months following the initial quarantine, we operated on the premise that we would be back to our offices imminently. We did not reconcile ourselves to the fact that working from home would be a long-term reality until late in 2020.

GRI 306-1, -2

SDG 12.4, 12.5

SASB

#### WHY IT MATTERS GRI 103

We generate waste in all aspects of our business operations. Waste reduction is essential because it is part of our engagement to improving on our operational efficiency and it aligns with the values and expectations of our team members.

#### WHAT WE ARE DOING

We have been running waste sorting, reduction, and recovery programs for over 25 years at Bell. We have established objectives, monitoring processes, and reporting on our waste generating activities.



Our waste data for a portion of our operations and for our administrative buildings are in part comprised of estimates based on the average weight of third-party waste collection service containers—estimates which were not updated until late in 2020. Since a minimal number of team members was in our offices, and since the waste data are fundamentally based on the number of container pickups multiplied by a predetermined average weight under normal operating conditions, the data are not representative of the reality for most of the reporting period. Moreover, our waste data is meant to show evidence of the success of our initiatives to change waste sorting behaviours and reduction efforts. In order to evaluate the success of such programs, precise and consistent data are needed. The data, therefore, are not meaningful, nor are they decision-useful.

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### **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. This year, the pandemic had an effect on the volumes of waste we generated. Among others, we noted a decrease in volume of hardware sent to recycling. Warehouses also experienced a decrease in the volume of recyclable and waste generated.

Please note that we do not consider this data to be meaningful due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our business activities.

GRI 306-3, -4, -5

## Recovered Operational Waste (in tonnes)

Operations	2020			2019		
	Waste Recovered	Waste Diverted from disposal	Waste directed to disposal	Waste Recovered	Waste Diverted from disposal	Waste directed to disposal
Fleet <sup>2</sup>	511	511	0	461	461	0
Hazardous Materials <sup>3</sup>	1,961	1,961	0	1,481	1,481	0
Packaging products <sup>4</sup>	1,212	957	255	1,667	1,171	496
Hardware <sup>5</sup>	16,995	7,280	9,715	18,089	8,539	9,549
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,679</b>	<b>10,709</b>	<b>9,970</b>	<b>21,698</b>	<b>11,653</b>	<b>10,045</b>

We still face a challenge with fibre optic cable, which cannot be recycled or reused at this time. Our concern about this issue pushed us to participate in the **Grands Rendez-vous** event organized by **Écotech Québec** where we presented our challenge to a group of companies who would then pitch solutions to us. We picked a partner at the event and, since then, have been working with them to come up with a solution.

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### Hazardous waste

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.

<sup>2</sup> Tires, batteries, oil and oil filters, and used engine antifreeze

<sup>3</sup> Lead-acid batteries, alkaline batteries, fluorescent tubes, oily containers, contaminated rags and absorbents, aerosols and other pressurized containers, paints, solvents, and glues

<sup>4</sup> For network equipment, such as wood pallets, cardboard boxes and plastic wrap

<sup>5</sup> Telecom materials, such as cables, terminals, utility poles and cable reels

GRI 306-2, -3, -4

SDG 12.4

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.

#### **Hazardous waste recovery objective**

In addition to other waste objectives, we report our progress toward our objective of recovering and diverting to certified recyclers 100% of generated hazardous waste by 2024. We continue to pursue this target and do not believe the associated data have been compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are divert 100% of the hazardous materials we recover, including all of our network batteries and residual material from our fleet services. Our metric illustrates the gap between *generated* and *recovered* hazardous waste. Network batteries make up the greatest proportion of hazardous materials generated at Bell. Other hazardous materials include aerosols, absorbents, oil containers and fluorescent tubes.

#### **Objectives of our 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**
- **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.**

In previous years, we reported having collection gaps in Atlantic Canada and Manitoba for aerosols, fluorescent tubes and paint. In 2019, we closed the gap in Atlantic Canada and we are working on implementing an improved collection program in Manitoba for aerosols, fluorescent tubes, and paint. Although these categories of hazardous waste represent only about 4% of the total quantity of waste that we generate, we believe that they should be recuperated and sent to certified recyclers. We aim to have such collection services operational by 2024.

In 2020, we were able to recover and divert to certified recyclers approximately 99% of all generated hazardous materials.

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### **Waste from administrative buildings**

Bell's reuse and recycling programs address residual materials such as electronic waste, toner cartridges, and office furniture. Our waste initiatives also focus on reduction at the source, such as reduced consumption of paper for administrative purposes and packaging.

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. This program is now available at 93 sites. Without action on the part of every team member, reducing waste in our offices would not be possible.

Despite the circumstances of the pandemic, we will continue to pursue our goal of reaching and maintaining 55 kg of waste sent to landfill per employee per year in Bell-owned or -leased administrative buildings by 2024. However, we are closely monitoring what the future of office work looks like, and will adjust our metric accordingly.

Despite the pandemic and the absence of most team members in our offices in 2020, we implemented initiatives to reduce waste at the source. Our latest initiative is the introduction of a policy on single-use plastics. We eliminated the distribution of single-use plastic bags in all retail stores and, when team members return to offices, they will find that we have established restrictions on all unnecessary single-use plastic items in on-site cafeterias across Bell properties—including plastic straws and stir sticks, unrecyclable coffee pods, creamers for coffee and condiments. Additionally, when it is safe to do so (following COVID-19 guidelines), we will no longer provide bottled water in Bell buildings where potable tap water is available.

GRI 306-2

While most of our team members worked from home, our operational teams continued to deploy services and build out our network across Canada, even if at a reduced rate during the initial months of the pandemic. We continued to replace aging and damaged telephone poles, replace network batteries and replace tires on vehicles. Original equipment manufacturer tires that were removed were sold to the tire installer to be reused on other vehicles. And we completed the integration of Bell MTS into our national waste management operations.

## Environmental stewardship for customer-facing electronic devices

Recovery of mobile devices is difficult to predict and control, as it depends on the rate at which customers upgrade to newer devices. Often, recovery rates correlate 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. This has made it difficult for us to predict how many phones we would be able to collect and therefore difficult to set an objective.

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. From 2016-2020, Bell has donated over 250 thousand dollars of the net proceeds from our mobile phone recovery program to a partner in 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.

GRI 301-3

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### WHY IT MATTERS GRI 103

Due to the rapid obsolescence of communications devices, particularly mobile phones, they represent an increasing proportion of electronic waste (e-waste). E-waste disposal is a global issue with global attention now on the health of those who end up sorting the components.

Our relationship with customers provides an opportunity for effective management of product recycling, reuse and disposal. Communications companies like Bell, therefore, face increasing regulatory compliance requirements related to this issue. Multiple jurisdictions across Canada have implemented separate and sometimes conflicting e-waste collection and recycling regulations, requiring companies to finance the collection, treatment, recycling, or proper disposal of devices. Our relationship with customers also creates a risk to our reputation if we do not properly address the e-waste issue.

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

We have implemented an effective program for managing e-waste recycling, reuse and disposal, including national take-back programs, drop boxes, and mail-in instructions.

For more details on these programs, visit [Bell.ca/recycling](https://Bell.ca/recycling).

In 2020, thanks to our customers' participation in our recovery programs, Bell diverted more than 2,537 tonnes of electronics from landfill. Due to COVID-19, store closures resulted in less foot traffic and thus less opportunity to collect e-waste in-stores. A decrease of 172 tonnes of e-waste was recovered in 2020 compared to 2019.

GRI 306-2  
GRI 306-3, -4, -5

### Customer Facing Electronic Waste Recovered, Diverted and Disposed

2019-2020 (number of tonnes recovered, diverted from disposal and disposed of)<sup>8</sup>

Item	2020			2019			Change in Recovered Waste from 2019 to 2020
	Waste Recovered	Waste diverted from disposal	Waste directed to disposal	Waste Recovered	Waste diverted from disposal	Waste directed to disposal	
<b>TV Receives</b>	1,772	1,772	0	1919	1919	0	-147
<b>Modems</b>	747	747	0	770.7	770.7	0	-23.7
<b>Mobile Phones</b>	15.9	15.9	0	18.4	18.4	0	-2.5
<b>Mobile Phone Batteries</b>	2	2	0	1	1	0	+1
<b>Mobile Phone Accessories</b>	0.2	0.2	0	0.4	0.4	0	-0.2
<b>Total</b>	2,537.4	2,537.4	0	2,708.1	2,708.1	0	-172.4

<sup>8</sup> PwC provided limited assurance over this indicator. See PwC's assurance statement

## 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. In 2017, 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.

Store closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to an overall reduction in the total number of devices collected. Despite this challenge, we recovered 2,094,234 units.<sup>9</sup> Since January 2016, we have recovered 11,738,938 units, thus exceeding our target of recovering 10 million electronics by 2020.

### Customer Facing Electronic Devices Recovered

2016-2020 (number of units collected)<sup>10</sup>

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
<b>TV Receivers</b>	1,004,786	1,199,381	1,151,635	1,268,793	1,103,220
<b>Modems</b>	996,786	1,133,372	1,052,726	1,051,270	945,715
<b>Mobile Phones<sup>11</sup></b>	92,662	169,473	248,193	176,981	143,945
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,094,234</b>	<b>2,502,226</b>	<b>2,452,554</b>	<b>2,497,044</b>	<b>2,192,880</b>
<b>Cumulative Yearly Total</b>	<b>11,738,938</b>	<b>9,644,704</b>	<b>7,142,478</b>	<b>4,689,924</b>	<b>2,192,880</b>

<sup>9</sup> PwC provided limited assurance over this indicator. See PwC's assurance statement

<sup>10</sup> PwC provided limited assurance over this indicator. See PwC's assurance statement

<sup>11</sup> Numbers of mobile phone collected for 2016, 2017, and 2018 are restated to adjust for double counting in previous methods. The cumulative yearly totals have been adjusted accordingly. The impact of the error is an overall decrease of 2% from 2016 to 2018.

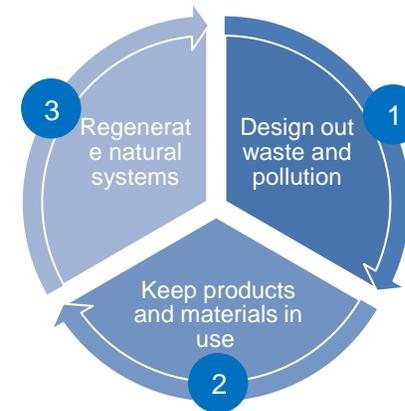
# Circular Economy

## The Future of Bell is Circular

As a guide to transition Bell from a linear economy to a circular economy, we are utilizing the Ellen MacArthur Foundations<sup>14</sup> three (3) guiding principles of a circular economy:

1. Design out waste and pollution
2. Keep products and materials in use
3. Regenerate natural systems

By using these principles as a framework for Bell's circular economy model, we will adapt these principles to effectively harness the cross functionality of our business. This will enable us to instill a holistic approach to reduce and reuse waste in the communication industry.



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### What is Bell currently doing?

#### Procurement of products and services

A core component of Bell's business is dependant on the procurement of products and services from suppliers. We have implemented strong environmental and procurement policies in contracts, such that all suppliers who we conduct business with are bound to standards consistent with Bell's Supplier Code of Conduct and sustainable criteria for tangible goods contracts.

By embedding Bell's sustainable criteria into supplier contracts where tangible goods are supplied we are able to mitigate the use of toxic substances and conflict minerals, address the recyclability or materials, identification of plastics, energy efficiency and our overall carbon footprint, before products enter the value loop.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept>



At the beginning of 2021, Bell launched a company-wide directive on single-use plastics with the purpose of reducing plastic waste. At launch time, 4 single-use plastic categories were targeted: 1) Plastic bags and 2) promotional items are in effect at the moment; 3) plastic water bottles and 4) cafeteria items will be implemented as soon as the sanitary restrictions linked to COVID-19 are lifted. The goal of this ban is to limit their purchase and utilisation. Other products will be identified in the future and will be added to the single-use plastic ban.

As a company, we are directing our focus to reduction at the source, and reutilization of products and materials by encouraging our businesses to rethink consumption patterns, redesign internal packaging processes, work with various stakeholders to procure and develop products and packaging, and repurpose products and packaging where possible.

For more information on Bell's Responsible Procurement practices and policies, please refer to the Responsible Procurement info sheet on our [website](#).

### **Research and development for customer-facing products**

At Bell, we are continuously striving to improve our current business models, processes and design of our customer facing products and services. To develop efficient and effective business practices, Bell encourages employees to rethink current design methods to improve both efficiency and performance, rethink consumption patterns to reduce material waste at the source, and work with stakeholders to manage and redirect products and materials from landfill.

To ensure our customer facing products are operating at the highest standards, Bell participates in a voluntary energy efficiency program called CEEVA (Canadian Energy Efficiency Voluntary Agreement). Through this voluntary participation, Bell is committed to improving the energy efficiency of set-top boxes (STB) and small network equipment (SNE) to meet Energy Star standards.

For more information on Bell's commitment to the Canadian Energy Efficiency Voluntary Agreement please refer to the energy standards for [STB](#) and [SNE](#).

## **Adopting effective business models**

Although the process of transitioning Bell to a circular economy has just begun, we have already adopted various strategies that are reflective of a circular economy including reuse and repair to extend the useful life of products and materials.

Through the deployment of Bell's network and maintenance, we have created a return, repair and reuse system for our wooden cable reels, which are used to wind, transport and lay cables. After use in the field, the wooden reels are returned to the warehouse where they will be reused and wound with new cable. If a wooden reel is damaged it will be directed to a supplier for repair and returned to the warehouse for reuse once complete. If a wooden reel is too damaged and cannot be repaired, it will be dismantled and the materials will be sent to various sites to be recycled.

Our clients also participate in the success of our circular initiatives by participating in our rental models for TV receivers, otherwise known as Set-Top-Boxes. A typical TV service installation, purchased by a customer from Bell requires a Set-Top-Box for each TV. Bell maintains ownership of all Set-Top-Boxes and operates a rental-only model where Set-Top-Boxes are not sold to customers. By maintaining 100% ownership of Set-Top-Boxes throughout their entire lifecycle we are able to maintain, repair and reuse our Set-Top-Boxes creating a closed-loop system for our technology. In 2020, Bell recovered over 1 million Set-Top-Boxes from customers and of those we were able to redeploy over 700 thousand to customers.

On the side of our mobile devices, customers can return them via The Bell Trade-in Program are eligible for a certificate equivalent to the phone's value, for use in store towards the purchase of a new phone or accessories. Return phones are sent to companies specialized in electronics refurbishment and resale.

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## **Looking ahead**

Our vision for circular economy at Bell is based on leveraging the cross functionality of our four existing environmental programs including responsible procurement, resource consumption, residual material and product stewardship.



To create regenerative value loops, we are currently developing a strong and holistic circular economy structure. Through this structure our goal is to increase cross-functionality between our current environmental programs (listed above), enforce our purchase mechanism to make most thoughtful purchases possible as often waste is not an accident, acknowledging the consequences of decisions made at the design stage, and re-define our corporate metrics such that they reflect Bell's defined three principles of circular economy.

We are also looking at the benefits that Bell services can bring in the transition to the circular economy in different commercial sectors.

*To the extent this information sheet contains forward-looking statements including, without limitation, outlooks, plans, objectives, strategic priorities, commitments, undertakings and other statements that do not refer to historical facts, these statements are not guarantees of future performance or events, and we caution you against relying on any of these forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties and are based on assumptions that give rise to the possibility that actual results or events could differ materially from our expectations expressed in, or implied by, such forward-looking statements. Refer to BCE Inc.'s most recent annual management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), as updated in BCE Inc.'s subsequent quarterly MD&As, for further information on such risks, uncertainties and assumptions. BCE Inc.'s MD&As are available on its website at [bce.ca](http://bce.ca), on SEDAR at [sedar.com](http://sedar.com) and on EDGAR at [sec.gov](http://sec.gov).*