

The Electronics Declutter Checklist

8 steps for letting go of old devices safely

promo.ccr cyber.com/articles/electronics-declutter-8-steps

For NAPO professional organizers and their clients: getting the device out of the home is only part of the job. The data, the law, the recycler, and the paperwork are the rest.

01-08 · THE STEPS

From the first drawer to the certificate

1. Gather every device into one place — computers and phones, plus tablets, printers, external and USB drives, memory cards, cameras, gaming systems, networking gear, smart devices, chargers, and cables.
2. Sort into keep · reuse or donate · sell or trade in · recycle. Pull lithium-ion batteries and the devices that hold them aside: EPA says they do not belong in household trash or curbside bins (fire risk).
3. Ask "what might be on this?" Photos, tax and banking records, passwords, medical and business files. Deleting or reformatting is not secure removal (CISA). Back up what the client wants, then plan how the rest is destroyed.
4. Ask whose data it is. A physician's, attorney's, or business owner's home laptop may carry regulated information. HIPAA requires covered entities to address final disposition of ePHI and removal before media re-use.
5. Security before convenience. In an unattended bin you no longer know who has access, how long it sits, whether staff are trained, or when data is destroyed. HHS: PHI should not be abandoned in publicly accessible receptacles.
6. Look for R2 or e-Stewards certification — the two accredited standards EPA recognizes and recommends. An independent auditor has checked environmental, safety, data-security, and downstream practices, with continuing oversight.
7. Find out where it actually goes. Electronics pass through several hands. R2v3 and e-Stewards both require downstream due diligence on the vendors that receive controlled material.
8. Keep chain of custody to the end — delivery to a certified facility, a verified local program, a scheduled pickup, or a tracked mail-back straight to the processor, with a Certificate of Recycling or Destruction back.

STATE RULES

25 states + DC have electronics recycling laws

Covered products (TVs, computers, monitors, printers and more) and requirements differ by state, per EPA. Let a recycler that operates where the client lives carry the rules. Two questions, both required: Was the equipment disposed of properly? and Was the information on it protected properly?

THE ORGANIZER'S CHECKLIST

Eight questions before a device leaves the client's possession

#	Ask	#	Ask
1	Has the client backed up anything they want to keep?	5	Is the recycler R2 or e-Stewards certified?
2	Could the device contain personal, financial, medical, or business data?	6	Will the client receive documentation of recycling and data destruction?
3	Does the client have professional or regulatory obligations (HIPAA, financial, legal)?	7	Does the recycler know the state electronics recycling requirements that apply?
4	Do we know who will handle the device once it leaves the home?	8	Can we track the device from the home to the processing facility?

MAIL-BACK

What to ask any mail-back or drop-off program

Is the processing facility R2 or e-Stewards certified? · Is certified data destruction provided? · Is the shipment trackable? · Does the client receive a Certificate of Recycling or Destruction? · Does the program meet applicable state electronics recycling requirements? · Can it accommodate HIPAA and other regulatory obligations? · Does the company process the equipment itself, or forward it? CyberCrunch Mail Back ships eligible electronics with prepaid labels directly to an R2v3, RIOS, and NAID AAA certified processing operation and returns documentation after processing.

Sources: EPA (Certified Electronics Recyclers; Used Lithium-Ion Batteries; state electronics recycling laws); CISA (Proper Disposal of Electronic Devices); HHS OCR HIPAA Security Rule 45 CFR 164.310(d)(2) and disposal guidance; SERI R2v3; e-Stewards Standard. Informational only — not legal advice. CyberCrunch is not affiliated with NAPO.