

FACT SHEET

Remanufactured Toner Cartridges

Buying remanufactured toner cartridges and recycling empty cartridges are easy ways to reduce the environmental impact of these products while saving substantial amounts of money. Any office equipment that uses a toner cartridge, rather than requiring toner to be added to the machine, should be able to use a remanufactured toner cartridge. Many toner cartridge remanufacturers both supply customers with remanufactured toner cartridges and collect spent cartridges.



This Fact Sheet provides important information for those wishing to purchase remanufactured toner cartridges. Read and learn about:

- General information on remanufactured toner cartridges (including their environmental and economic benefits)
- Tips on evaluating remanufacturers
- How to get the best performance from your toner cartridges
- Steps for success

Remanufactured Toner Cartridges — General Information

Quality

When remanufactured by reputable companies exercising good quality control, remanufactured toner cartridges will perform as well as, or better than, new cartridges. Almost all suppliers will guarantee that the quality of their remanufactured toner cartridges will match or exceed that of an original equipment manufacturer (OEM).

Remanufactured toner cartridges should not damage the copy machine or printer. Printer damage resulting from a defective toner cartridge is rare and usually very minor. A properly remanufactured cartridge is no more likely to cause damage to a machine than a new cartridge. Additionally, antitrust legislation prohibits copier and printer manufacturers from voiding their warranties when remanufactured toner cartridges are used in their machines.

The Remanufacturing Process

In general, used cartridges undergoing remanufacturing are first disassembled and the parts inspected. Key parts include the drum, corona wire assembly, wiper blade, and roller. Worn or defective parts are replaced, and the cartridge is cleaned, refilled, and reassembled. Toner cartridges can be remanufactured several times.

Cost

Remanufactured toner cartridges save money. Remanufactured cartridges cost 30% to 60% less on a per copy basis than non-remanufactured cartridges. Some cartridge remanufacturers will accept used cartridges at no cost, or even buy them back or provide a credit, depending on the model, therefore saving you even more money.

Environmental Benefits

➤ **97% Recyclable**

The typical used toner cartridge weighs about 3 pounds and is composed of 40% plastic, 40% metal, and smaller percentages of rubber, paper, foam, and toner. The plastic is made of engineering-grade polymers and takes at least 1,000 years to decompose. However, approximately 97% of these combined components can be recycled and reused.



➤ **Conserves Resources**

Accordingly, using remanufactured toner cartridges reduces pollution and waste by minimizing the amount of materials, such as plastic, steel, aluminum, and rubber, disposed of in landfills. It also conserves natural resources by eliminating the need for virgin materials used to make new cartridges. For each pound of new material used in remanufacturing, 5 to 9 pounds of virgin materials are conserved.

➤ **Saves Energy**

Using remanufactured toner cartridges also saves energy. Approximately 3 quarts of oil are burned in the production of a single new toner cartridge. A used toner cartridge can be remanufactured up to four times, depending on its type and condition, thus potentially saving up to 12 quarts of fuel.

Evaluating Remanufacturers

Most remanufacturers are reliable and provide quality toner cartridges that meet or exceed OEM standards. Some companies, however, simply drill a hole in the side of the cartridge and refill it with toner, failing to clean and repair broken parts. These “drill and fill” operations do not produce quality remanufactured toner cartridges. Also be aware that some products perform better than others. It is important to get references from suppliers and test several products before purchasing significant quantities of any model or brand.

Compatibles vs Remanufactured?

You may hear or see the term "compatible" toner cartridges. Compatible cartridges, according to one vendor's website, are manufactured by third party companies (companies other than the original maker of your equipment) which specialize in after-market products. Compatible toner cartridges use new or mostly new parts but beyond that, the definition is unclear. Some vendors believe compatibles are the same as remanufactured. Others believe compatibles are not the same as remanufactured asserting they contain all new parts (though not OEM parts), except perhaps to reuse the plastic case. Since there is no consensus on this term, clarify with your vendor how their toner cartridges are made to ensure you are getting what you want.

Toner Cartridge Tips

Printing problems are generally caused by either a printer malfunction or a toner cartridge malfunction. The following tips can ensure good toner cartridge performance or help determine the cause when a problem arises.

- **Troubleshooting:** The best way to determine whether a problem is caused by the toner cartridge or the machine is to replace the cartridge with one that you know is working well. Or you can switch the cartridge to another machine. If changing the toner cartridge corrects the problem or the problem follows the cartridge to another printer, then the cartridge is most likely defective.
- **Maintain Equipment:** Clean copy machines and printers frequently according to the instructions on your equipment.
- **Use dry paper:** Since paper absorbs moisture, try replacing the copier paper with clean, dry paper.
- **Keep packaged until use:** Do not remove the toner cartridge from its package until you are ready to use it. The shelf life of a cartridge in an unopened package is approximately 2.5 years. The shelf life of a cartridge in an opened package is approximately six months.

- **Handling:** When handling a toner cartridge, never touch the drum surface and always protect it from light. Place empty cartridges back in the protective foil bag.
- **Storage:** Do not expose cartridges to cold or hot temperatures or extreme humidity.

Source: Alameda County Waste Management Authority.
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