MATERION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions about Copper Beryllium and Recycling
FAQ 101

Are copper beryllium alloys recyclable?

Yes. Copper beryllium alloy scrap that is not contaminated with other metals such as iron, aluminum, cadmium, or lead, is readily recyclable by the primary producers and other recyclers. It is economically and environmentally advisable for the manufacturer or a recycler to segregate copper beryllium alloy scrap from other metals for recycle. Materion Brush Inc. purchases clean copper beryllium alloy scrap for reprocessing into new copper beryllium alloys. You can call Materion Brush Inc. at 800-BUY-BECU or click on Recycle CuBe to get help in recycling your copper beryllium scrap.

Can copper beryllium-containing materials be safely recycled?

Yes. Copper beryllium-containing materials can be safely recycled and have been for many years. Clean scrap from manufacturing operations can be recycled directly as new copper beryllium alloy. Certain processes, such as melting, utilized in the recycling of metals and materials require additional engineering and work practice controls to reduce potential exposure to the many hazardous materials encountered during recycling.

Are products containing copper beryllium alloys recoverable?

Yes. Products containing copper beryllium alloys are readily recoverable. The presence of copper beryllium in products and equipment does not negatively impact end-of-life management. Copper beryllium alloy components in products and equipment can be processed through normal recycling procedures. The copper portion of the alloy emerges as part of the general copper stream, while the beryllium remains behind as part of the by-product recycle stream.

How can I find a facility to recycle materials containing copper beryllium?

For a list of companies that collect and recycle copper beryllium scrap, electrical and electronic scrap, contact Materion Brush Inc. at 800-862-4118.

Can copper beryllium alloys be safely disposed?

Yes. Copper beryllium alloys do not pose a hazard to human health or the environment when discarded in a landfill and managed in accordance with existing federal and state requirements. As noted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in its 2002 report[1], beryllium in soils, like aluminum, is immobile because of its tendency to adsorb onto clay surfaces. Thus, beryllium has not been found to migrate or leach through soils to contaminate groundwater. In addition, one very significant property of copper beryllium is its corrosion resistance which is demonstrated by the fact that copper beryllium housings are specifically used to protect the electronics in trans-oceanic communications cables from the corrosive effects of seawater.

When discarded, is copper beryllium alloy considered a hazardous waste?

No. Beryllium is not a hazardous waste constituent and copper beryllium alloy is not a listed hazardous waste under federal rules and regulations. Wastes cannot be classified as hazardous due the presence of copper beryllium alloy.

Does beryllium occur naturally in the environment?

Yes. Beryllium is a naturally occurring element and is ubiquitous throughout the environment. Beryllium is found in soils, rocks, coal, wood and foodstuffs. The general population is exposed to naturally occurring beryllium from ambient air, drinking water and diet on a daily basis.

How can I obtain assistance?

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact your sales representative; our sales department at +1-216-486-4200; or the Product Safety Hotline at 1-800-862-4118 (in the U.S.) or +1-216-383-4019 (outside the U.S.). This document, as well as other product specific safety data information, can be found at www.materion.com. Additionally, information on the Beryllium Worker Protection Model and process specific safety guidance can be found in the Interactive Guide to Working Safely with Beryllium and Beryllium-containing Materials at www.berylliumsafety.com.

[1] Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry: Toxicological Profile for Beryllium. ATSDR, Atlanta (2002).