



WEEE/Recycling

DID YOU KNOW?

Over a million tonnes of waste from electrical and electronic equipment goes into landfill sites every year and the majority of this is toxic.

An Introduction to WEEE

The WASTE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT Regulations (WEEE) came into force on 2nd January 2007 and was implemented on 1st July 2007. Their aim is to reduce the environmental impact of this waste, by increasing recycling and recovery of electrical products. It seeks to achieve this by making producers, such as manufacturers of branded goods and producers of own brand products take on the financial obligations for collection, treatment and recovery of end of life electrical and electronic equipment waste.

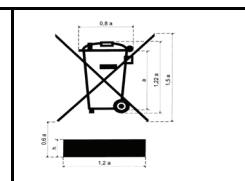
What does WEEE apply to?

The regulations set out a list of 10 product categories that are covered:

- Large Household Items (freezers, washing machines, etc)
- Small Household Items (vacuum cleaners, toasters, electric knives etc)
- IT and Telecom Equipment (personal computers, printers, calculators etc)
- Consumer Equipment (radio's, TV's, musical instruments etc)
- Lighting Equipment (luminaries, fluorescent tubes, discharge lamps etc)
- Electrical and Electronic Tools (drills, saws, sewing machines)
- Toys, Leisure and Sport Equipment (electric trains, video consoles, etc)
- Medical Devices (radiotherapy equipment, cardiology, dialysis etc)
- Monitoring and Control Equipment (smoke detectors, heating regulators, thermostats etc)
- Automatic Dispensers (automatic dispensers for hot drinks, cold bottles or cans, money etc)

A more detailed list of products involved and environmental guidance for your business visit

There is a simple way to discover whether a product is covered by WEEE – it should have the crossed out wheelee bin symbol illustrated. This should be on the product or packaging if the product is too small to accommodate the symbol. Note the underline beneath the symbol shows the product entered the market after 13th August 2005 and is therefore covered by WEEE



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The producer is required to join a 'compliance scheme', which is a Government Registered Body, submit sales volume data and pay a fee to contribute to the running of the civic amenities. Thereby they are 'financing' the management of household WEEE.

For business products, there are no fixed rules. The mechanism used to 'finance' recycling for a business product is up to the producer. So long as a system is in place to 'finance' recycling this is acceptable. For example, a business producer might choose to offer a free in store recycling service or a postal recycling service for small products. Alternatively they may choose to pass on the recycling obligations to their end users by changing their conditions of supply and agreeing the changes with the end user. To find out how the financial obligations are accepted, contact the producer of the product.

Business producers however are legally required to join a 'compliance scheme' and it is their compliance scheme who can tell you how the producer handles their financial obligations.

What are your obligations as an end user?

As a commercial user of the product, you must ensure that you transfer the product at the end of its life to someone who can recycle the product professionally. This could be back to the producer of the product for their compliance scheme, or in the case of products where you cannot identify the producer you would pick up the financial and legal obligation for recycling. You are not obliged to use the producer's compliance scheme if this is impractical, although you might pick up any recycling costs if this is the case.

Who does WEEE apply to?

Producers such as manufacturers, importers and resellers of own brand, distributors of household goods, commercial end users of electrical and electronic equipment covered by the regulations It also covers businesses involved in retail sales (to household consumers) and business sales (B 2 B) though the obligations differ in this respect.

What are the producer obligations?

If the product was put onto the market after 13th August 2005, the producer is required to 'finance' the collection, treatment and environmentally sound management of the product at the end of its life (these products are identified with a wheelie bin underlined symbol). The regulations call this 'future WEEE'.

The producer is also required to 'finance' the collection, treatment and environmentally sound disposal of products placed onto the market before 13th August 2005, but only when the end user is purchasing a 'like for like' replacement product. It is the producer of the 'new' replacement product that 'finances' the old product. The regulations call this 'historic WEEE'.

So, in the case of a producer selling a new product to an end user, the producer will be required to 'finance' both the new product when it becomes waste as well as any old product that it is replacing.

The regulations use the term 'finance'. It is important to understand that this does not necessarily mean a requirement for producers to offer a free recycling service. The mechanism of financing used is different depending on whether it is a household or business product.

For a household product, the end user is entitled to take the old product (that was purchased after the 13th August 2005 and has a wheelie bin underlined symbol) to their local civic amenity site for free recycling. For historic products (i.e. items purchased before the 13th August 2005), the end user is entitled to take that product to the 'distributor' of the new product, who will either offer an in store take back, free of charge, or direct you to the local civic amenity site.

