

make it – sell it – recycle it

New rules for distributors of electrical & electronic equipment

Are you ready for the WEEE Regulations?

Current status of Regulations

The new WEEE Regulations have been put in place with effect from January 2007 to tackle the growing amount of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). These apply to all companies who import, manufacture or re-brand electrical equipment in the UK.

These regulations also affect everyone who uses, sells, treats or disposes of WEEE. We recommend you read the guidance available from the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) so you become familiar with the regulations and your obligations.

Every year the UK throws away around 2 million tonnes of WEEE. It is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the UK and the EU. In 2003, the EU adopted the WEEE Directive to deal with this waste. More waste will be collected for treatment and recovery and less will go to landfill.

What you need to do

Provide free take-back

Everyone providing new electrical and electronic equipment (known as EEE¹) directly to household users/consumers is a distributor, and must provide facilities for their customer to return old equipment free of charge on the purchase of a replacement item. Where sales to business users are concerned there is no requirement for free take-back.

Distributors can meet the obligation to offer free take-back in two ways:-

- i) by joining the **Distributor Take-back Scheme** (DTS) which will support a network of collection facilities where consumers can return their WEEE; or
- ii) by offering **in-store take-back** of old equipment when consumers buy a replacement item. This can be directly on the distributor's premises or at local collection points for store-based retailers. Equipment collected through in-store take-back must be made available free-of-charge to producer compliance schemes for treatment and recycling. It is the distributor's responsibility to arrange and finance transport to a treatment facility. Distributors must keep records of how much equipment they collect through take-back. Distance sellers must either join the DTS, offer in-store take-back through one of their local stores (if one exists) or provide the customer with an alternative local route for free take-back.

Provide consumer information

All distributors must make information available to consumers on how they can dispose of WEEE, and the environmental benefits of doing so. This can be achieved by displaying posters, including leaflets with purchases, information on websites or in catalogues and brochures. The DTS will provide its members with information in a standard format, while non-members can put together their own information. Distributors must keep records of how they provide this information.

Producer obligations

If you manufacture, rebrand or import EEE, you will be regarded as a producer of EEE as well as a distributor. Please see the fact sheet for producers published by the Environment Agency to find out more.

Producers must declare their registration number to any distributor to whom he intends to supply EEE. It is good practice for distributors to check that producers that supply them with EEE are registered with the appropriate agency.

What you need to do next

- Decide whether you will be joining the Distributor Take-back Scheme or offering take-back yourself.
- Make sure that you are either a member of the DTS or have systems and policies for in-store takeback in place if you supply EEE to consumers by 1 July 2007.
- Make sure that you have arrangements in place to provide information about WEEE.
- Check whether you pick up any producer obligations through rebranding or importing EEE, and if so find out what you need to do.
- Check with the Environment Agency whether there are any waste licensing requirements if you are taking WEEE back in-store.

Where to find out more

VCA is the enforcement body for distributor obligations. From 1 July distributors have to offer consumers free take-back of old equipment when they buy a replacement item. For information see [VCA WEEE distributor enforcement](#).

The operator of the Distributor Take-back Scheme is Valpak Retail WEEE Services Ltd. www.valpak.co.uk/dts
tel : 08450 682572 or email : info@valpak.co.uk

The Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform has published non-statutory Guidance Notes and the Code of Practice for the collection of WEEE from Designated Collection Facilities.
www.berr.gov.uk/innovation/sustainability/weee/page30269.html

You can also get more information on the regulations from the Environment Agency's website:
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/weee

There are links to frequently asked questions and a list of events, seminars and workshops you could attend to find out more.

There is also information on the NetRegs website: www.netregs.gov.uk and from the Envirowise helpline: 0800 585794

1) The regulations apply to the following EEE: household appliances, IT and telecommunications equipment, consumer equipment, lighting, tools, toys, leisure and sports equipment, monitoring and control instruments and automatic dispensers. Some exclusions apply. From 1 April 2007, you will be able to identify any EEE you sell as it should be marked with the crossed out wheeled bin symbol.