

If you make it or sell it, you need to recycle it

Last year over 1.5 million tonnes of electrical and electronic equipment was sold in the UK. These products will eventually contribute to one of the fastest growing types of waste in the EU.

In July 2007, the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations came fully into force. The regulations implement the EU WEEE Directive which aims to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by increasing the amount that is separately collected, re-used (where possible), or sent for specialist treatment and recycled. Under these regulations anyone importing, rebranding or manufacturing electrical or electronic equipment (EEE) is classed as a 'producer' and must register and contribute to the costs of dealing with end-of life products.

Retailers of household EEE are also affected by the regulations and must either join the collective take-back system or allow customers to return WEEE in store free of charge. The collective system makes use of a network of over 1,500 collection facilities, most of which are nominated local authority civic amenity sites. Many retailers of EEE are also producers because they import or brand EEE for the UK market.

There are separate take-back arrangements for non-household equipment where responsibility for dealing with end-of-life equipment will either fall to the producer or the end user dependent on one of a number of factors.

With a small number of exceptions, electrical equipment covered by these regulations includes: **Household appliances, IT & telecommunications equipment, lighting tools, toys, leisure & sports equipment, monitoring & control instruments, medical devices and automatic dispensers.**

The WEEE system is already bringing benefits for the environment; better treatment, less waste to landfill and more recycling but there is more electrical and electronic waste that can be collected. We are also concerned that our investigations have shown that some WEEE is being illegally exported.



Used working equipment can be sold for re-use in the UK or abroad but some unscrupulous contractors will acquire and illegally export broken equipment, mis-describing it as refurbished or second-hand and working. It's vital that retailers who take-back broken equipment only hand it to a reputable contractor and satisfy themselves that it is being dealt with properly.

WEEE could cost you

Prosecution for breaching the WEEE regulations can lead to an unlimited fine in the Crown Court.

If you import, rebrand or manufacture household or non-household EEE in the UK you must register annually with an approved producer compliance scheme. If you are a producer and haven't registered for 2010, you need to act now.

More information about WEEE and your responsibilities under the regulations can be found on the Environment Agency's website at:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/weee