



Preparing for the WEEE Directive: An Overview

Waste arising from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) is the fastest growing waste stream in the UK but recycling rates are still extremely low. To counteract this problem, new legislation is set to come into force in 2007 in the shape of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive which will enforce new responsibilities on those involved in manufacturing, selling, distributing, recycling or treating electrical and electronic equipment.

Each person currently generates around 20kg of waste from EEE which equates to a UK total of over 1 million tonnes per year! According to the Environment Agency, the new Directive aims to:

- reduce the amount of waste arising from EEE
- make the producers of EEE responsible for the environmental impact of their products
- encourage separate collection and disposal of EEE for subsequent reuse, recovery or recycling
- improve the environmental performance of all those involved during the lifecycle of EEE

The Directive affects any business that manufactures, brands, sells or imports EEE, as well as businesses that store, treat or dismantle WEEE within the EU. It will also affect businesses that have WEEE to dispose of and the general public who will have more opportunities to recycle these products.

Producers/Manufacturers

When the WEEE regulations come into force, all products must be marked (either on the unit itself or on the packaging, warranty or instructions) with a crossed out wheelie bin symbol. Producers will also need to join a producer compliance scheme that has been approved by one of the environment agencies such as REPIC (the Recycling Electrical Products Industry Consortium). An annual fee will be paid and the producer must supply a report on the amount of EEE they place on the market. This helps to calculate the producers' market share and hence the proportion of cost they must pay.

Retailers

If a retailer sells EEE to the public, they will have to organise a take back scheme so that their customers can return their WEEE free of charge when the Directive comes into force. This will be on a one-for-one basis, as long as the new equipment is of a similar type and has the same function as the old equipment. Alternatively, retailers

can set up alternative collection systems as long as they are convenient for customers.

Retailers will also have to ask the producers of EEE for their unique producer number to prove the producer is in a compliance scheme. The retailer and producer can liaise to charge and show a 'visible fee' to consumers for treating and recycling certain types of WEEE.

Domestic Users

With the new Directive, consumers will be encouraged to separately dispose of their WEEE rather than including it with normal household waste. Methods of disposal will predominantly include taking units to CA sites which is likely to be the most popular method, using retailer take-back schemes or by using local authority collection services.

Each person currently generates around 20kg of waste from EEE which equates to a UK total of over 1 million tonnes per year!



Business Users

Although the principal burden will rest with the producers, any business or company that uses EEE (computers, printers, mobile phones, etc) will need to ensure that it is treated and recycled, whilst still maintaining their legal Duty of Care obligations. Whether the business or producer of the EEE ultimately pays for its disposal depends on two variables.

If the EEE was put on the market after 13 August 2005 it is classed as 'future WEEE' meaning that the producers of this are responsible for financing the collection and treatment costs. But for 'historic WEEE' (put on the market pre 13 August 2005), if the units are being replaced the EEE producer is responsible, but if the WEEE is not replaced then the business must pay.

Local Authorities

Although the financial burden of treating WEEE does not rest with the Government or with local authorities specifically, they will still need to ensure that there is an adequate network of collection facilities available for WEEE. It is anticipated that most WEEE will be collected at CA sites and should a local authority volunteer its CA site as a Designated Collection Facility (DCF), it is likely that they will receive some funding from the producers of EEE.

The WEEE Regulations are expected to come into force on 1 January 2007 with the main requirements and obligations on producers and distributors of EEE coming into force from 1 April 2007. Full producer responsibility for the costs of treating household WEEE will start on 1 July 2007.



For more information at this stage on what steps you need to take to prepare for the introduction of WEEE, contact HIPPOWASTE™ on 0870 880 2430.

HIPPOWASTE™ is a national provider of innovative waste management solutions and operator of the pioneering HIPPOBAG™ – a flexible and practical alternative to the traditional skip. HIPPOWASTE™ is well positioned to advise companies on complying with the WEEE Directive and can provide UK-wide solutions for the collection and disposal of WEEE.

The HIPPOBAG™ is already being used to help Hampshire County Council boost the recycling of televisions, computer monitors and other waste electrical items collected at its 26 Household Waste Recycling Centres across the county.



Ben Clark of HIPPOWASTE™ with Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for the Environment Cllr Mel Kendal

contact us

Call: **0870 880 2430**

Visit: **www.hippowaste.co.uk**

