



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
**Environment, Heritage and Local Government**

## **NEW REGULATIONS CLEAR WAY FOR PRODUCER-FUNDED RECYCLING OF WASTE BATTERIES**

***FREE TAKE BACK OF USED BATTERIES STARTS 26 SEPTEMBER 2008***

***Producer Run Public Awareness Campaigns will be Critical to Meeting***

***Challenging Targets - Gormley***

It's all systems go for a new battery recycling scheme in Ireland following the making of new Regulations by Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government to transpose and implement a new EU Batteries Directive which comes into operation across the EU on 26 September next.

The Minister today (24 July) also announced that he had approved WEEE Register, the independent body established to manage producer registration under the current WEEE scheme, as the registration body for the new Directive.

From 26 September 2008, final users of waste batteries will be entitled to leave them back free of charge, either to retail outlets selling equivalent batteries, or other authorised collection points, including local authority civic amenity sites, from that date onwards. Retail outlets that sell batteries will be required to take waste batteries even where the person depositing the waste batteries doesn't purchase a new battery.

Workplaces and schools, subject to the agreement of local management, can also be designated as collection points. This is to maximise take back arrangements for members of the public by providing collection points in addition to those at retail outlets and local authority civic amenity facilities.

The Minister called on businesses and the public service to take a lead in providing space for receptacles storing waste batteries, as the achievement by Ireland of mandatory collection targets will be dependant on the number and accessibility of collection points. Producers will be responsible for the financing of the collection, treatment, and recycling and environmentally sound disposal of waste batteries. The targets to be met under the Directive are challenging: producers must collect 25% of what they place on the market by 2012 and 45% by 2016.

“Many people tend to hoard old batteries or throw them into the bin destined for landfill. Addressing these barriers will be important from the outset. High profile, sustained public awareness campaigns by the producer compliance schemes will be critical. I will be asking those seeking approval as compliance schemes to outline in detail their proposals in this area”, the Minister said. The Minister said that it is anticipated that the two current compliance scheme for WEEE recycling, WEEE Ireland and ERP would be seeking approval to operate as compliance schemes under the Batteries Directive.

The Regulations follow an intensive public consultation, which was initiated with the establishment of a Batteries Working Group. This group, a sub-committee of the WEEE Monitoring Group, which was established in July 2006, includes representatives of the battery industry, retailers, manufacturers, IBEC, SIMI, the waste management sector, local authorities and the EPA. The consultation included publication of draft regulations in January 2008. “I received some 25 written submissions all of which were carefully studied by my Department. Some excellent suggestions were made and I was happy to take many of these on board which have had the effect of giving us a rigorous set of Regulations which will provide an effective legislative framework for this important Directive.” A summary of the various suggestions made will be published on the Department’s website at [www.viron.ie](http://www.environ.ie).

The Batteries Directive also prohibits excess levels of mercury, lead and cadmium from batteries placed on the market from 26 September 2008 onwards. The Minister went on to state that “the environmental concerns related to batteries and accumulators are linked to the materials they contain. This is particularly the case for mercury, lead and cadmium as batteries containing these metals are defined as hazardous. We must divert them from landfill”.

The Minister also asked consumers to plan their battery usage requirements and use accumulators or rechargeable batteries instead adding “accumulators are not only better value for money, but minimise waste arisings as well”. Recent developments in nickel-metal hydride (NiMH) rechargeable batteries make their use not only feasible but attractive as they can be charged 1,000 times, have up to three time the capacity of a similar sized nickel-cadmium (NiCd) battery and have no memory effect.

“Enforcement of the regulations implementing the requirement of the Batteries Directive will be a key priority. ”, the Minister added. The EPA will have the lead role in enforcing the Battery Regulations. These responsibilities relate to enforcement of producer responsibility obligations and, where appropriate, collection and treatment facilities.

The Minister urged all stakeholders to continue to work together in a focused and cohesive manner so that we can successfully implement this Directive “People need to appreciate the environmental benefits and enhanced customer service opportunities which will arise following commencement of the waste battery take back scheme.”

Minister Gormley concluded by thanking the representatives of the battery industry, retailers, manufacturers, IBEC, SIMI, the waste management sector, local authorities and the EPA for their input in developing proposals and systems for the battery take back system.

ENDS

---

Media queries:  
Press and Information Office  
Tel: (01) 888 2638 (direct)  
(01) 888 2000  
E-Mail: [press-office@environ.irlgov.ie](mailto:press-office@environ.irlgov.ie)  
Web site: [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)

---

## **Note for Editors**

### **Batteries Directive<sup>1</sup>**

The Batteries Directive entered into force on 26 September 2006. Previous Directives on batteries contained no collection or recycling targets. Consequently many batteries still end up in landfill.

The Directive applies to all types of batteries and rechargeable batteries (which are known in the trade as accumulators) including any incorporated into electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and/or battery packs, regardless of their shape, volume, weight, material composition or use with the exception of batteries and/or accumulators used in equipment –

- connected with the protection of Member States' essential security interests, arms, munitions and war material (with the exclusion of products that are not intended for specifically military purposes) and/or
- designed to be sent into space.

### **Free Take Back**

From 26 September 2008 onwards all battery retailers will be required to take back, free of charge, waste batteries including rechargeable batteries including those incorporated into electrical and electronic equipment and/or battery packs.

Any person depositing waste batteries at the premises of any battery retailer will not be obligated to purchase any product or products from the retailer concerned.

### **Prohibitions**

Producers will be prohibited from placing –

- batteries, including re-chargeable batteries (known in the trade as accumulators) that contain more than 0.0005% of mercury by weight;
- portable batteries (e.g. AAA, AA, PP9, D etc.) and portable accumulators that contain more than 0.002% of cadmium by weight.

on the market.

The mercury prohibition will not apply to button cells with a mercury content of no more than 2% by weight,

The cadmium prohibition will not apply to batteries and/or accumulators intended for use in emergency and alarm systems, including emergency lighting, medical equipment, and cordless power tools.

---

<sup>1</sup> European Parliament and Council Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators and repealing Directive 91/157/EC

## **Financing**

Producers will be required to finance any net costs arising from –

- the collection, storage, treatment and recovery and/or disposal of waste batteries and/or accumulators including those incorporated into EEE and/or battery packs, and
- any public information campaign on the collection, storage, treatment and recovery and/or disposal of portable batteries and/or portable.

## **Targets**

Each producer shall be required to collect, as a minimum, no later than –

- 26 September 2012, 25%, and
- 26 September 2016, 45%

of the quantity by type of portable battery he or she places on the market.

The Directive also prescribes minimum recycling efficiencies that must be achieved by recycling facilities procured by producers.

## **WEEE Register**

The WEEE Register Society was set up to assist producer companies in meeting their obligations for the responsible management of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). It will also handle this function in relation to the Batteries Directive. The registration system operated by WEEE Register is self-financing with the necessary funding coming from the obligated producers

---