

WEEE IRELAND WELCOMES GOVERNMENT INTRODUCTION OF NEW EWASTE LEGISLATION

Electrical recycling target to increase to 65% from 2019

New regulations will see Ireland work towards a more circular economy – helping to put a stop to rogue WEEE collections

Press Release
March 31st 2014

WEEE Ireland, the largest compliance scheme in Ireland managing waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), has today welcomed the publication of new legislation that will help Ireland increase the amount of ewaste it recycles annually. Under the new rules signed into law* by Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government Phil Hogan T.D., Ireland will need to significantly increase the amount of WEEE collected for recycling in the coming years as follows:

- **From 2016, 45% by weight comparison of what we purchase each year (WEEE items) will need to go through an authorised recycling system;**
- **This will increase further to 65% from 2019.**

This means building on the great efforts Irish people have undertaken in recent years, bringing WEEE back to Civic Amenity sites, retailers and authorised community collection events for recycling and not dumping them in landfill or illegally fly tipping as was common place across the country just a decade ago.

The Irish are well up to this challenging task and have improved year on year the WEEE recycling figures being brought back. We now annually recycle almost 8kg per capita - double the EU target of 4kg per head of population in Ireland – for example, the Digital switchover prompted many people to release old televisions that were no longer of use, and by safely recycling them with WEEE Ireland the heavy metals, lead glass and other potential hazards were treated properly and the metal and other materials were recovered for use again in manufacturing. This not only protects the environment and human health but also helps with resource efficiency and limiting the raw material extraction required to sustain the technological use of lifestyles today.

All old fridges, pcs, televisions and electrical toys and tools along with fluorescent tubes and batteries can be easily recycled free of charge thanks to the WEEE System put in place in Ireland since 2005.

The new Regulations just released also underline the mandatory handover of WEEE from retail and recycling centre collection points, ensuring the recycling feed stock is kept in an authorised treatment loop. This helps Ireland work towards a more circular economy by capturing critical raw materials in the recycling process. Despite this, large numbers of washing machines and other large appliances are not being

recycled in the formal system and the Scheme warns against rogue collectors who collect WEEE from unwitting householders and do not put them through an authorised treatment facility as they are releasing potential hazards into the environment and also hindering this circular economy objective. Renewed priority is to be given to preparing for re-use of WEEE and its components by registered organisations under the new Regulations.

Photovoltaic panels fall under the scope of the new regulations. This means that 'producers' of these solar panels will now have responsibilities under the regulations to put an environmental management system in place when they reach the end of life as WEEE.

Leo Donovan, WEEE Ireland CEO, today welcomed the new Regulations, saying they were the culmination of 18 months of hard work by the Minister, his Department officials and all the stakeholders involved in the Irish WEEE System:

"Ireland was one of the first European countries to introduce a new ewaste system in 2005 and we want to be among the first to achieve the targets in the coming years. The application of increased targets for recovery of WEEE as well as a new programme for reuse of electrical appliances will require a renewed focus for the WEEE Ireland Scheme in 2014, which will also include a new compliance model for Producers of professional electrical equipment.

"The new regulations have also recognised the global aspect of ecommerce today clarifying the rules for registration by Producers from abroad in Ireland and ensuring they can register for their Producer responsibilities in Ireland."

The new Regulations also highlight the importance of treatment standards for WEEE recycling facilities so the quality of material recovery from the recycling process is high. WEEE Ireland were early adopters of a new recycling standard in Europe called WEEELabex and are working with their many Irish waste operators and European partners in the WEEE Forum to ensure it is in place to meet the requirements of these new rules.

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Notes to Editors:

*The process by which European Directives are put into national law is called transposition and this process was completed last week for the WEEEEE Directive when S.I. No 149 of 2014; European Union (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations 2014 was signed into law by Minister Phil Hogan TD and published in the Iris Oifigiúil– Irelands official state gazette.

The WEEE Ireland Compliance Scheme operates on behalf of the Producers i.e. manufactures, importers and brand owners of electrical products and batteries and represents more than 800 of them in Ireland.