

THE WEEE REGULATIONS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

The WEEE Regulations aim to tackle the growing amount of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) in the UK and to reduce its impact on the environment. The Regulations apply to all electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) intended for household or non-household use placed on the UK market. Ten categories¹ of EEE are covered (with some exclusions). The Regulations apply to all businesses regardless of size and have important implications for distributors of EEE as well as its producers.²

Irrespective of the method of sale, you are a distributor if you are:

- a retailer of new household EEE;
- a wholesaler of new household EEE.

You are also classed as a distributor under the WEEE Regulations if you:

- carry out distance selling, eg internet sales, mail order, tele-sales;
- supply products direct to consumers, eg internet sales, factory outlets.

From 1 April 2007, all new EEE covered by the Regulations should be marked with the crossed out wheeled bin symbol (see Fig 1).

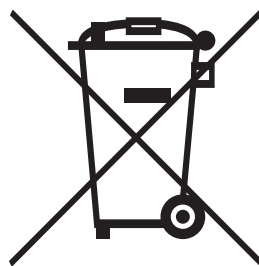


Fig 1 Approved symbol

OBLIGATIONS

All distributors selling new EEE to householders must:

- provide facilities to enable their customers to return old equipment free of charge when buying a replacement item;
- provide householders with information on:
 - the options available to them for the free return of their WEEE;

- the environmental benefits resulting from its separate collection;
- the meaning of the crossed out wheeled bin symbol;
- keep records for four years of household WEEE collected and information provided.

There are no obligations with regard to sales of non-household EEE or for take-back of non-household WEEE. However, you may be asked to help others in the supply chain for such equipment to discharge their obligations.

There are also no obligations relating to the sales of second-hand or reconditioned household EEE previously placed on the UK market.



¹ See EN759 *An overview of the WEEE Regulations.*

² See EN760 *The WEEE Regulations and producers of electrical and electronic equipment.*



Producers are required to give their registration number to any distributor to whom they supply EEE. It is good practice to check that your suppliers are registered with the appropriate regulator (see below). VCA, an executive agency of the Department for Transport, is the enforcement body for EEE distributor obligations.

PROVIDE FREE TAKE-BACK

You can meet this obligation in several ways.

- You can join the Distributor Take-back Scheme (DTS) operated by Valpak Retail WEEE Services Ltd. The DTS supports a network of Designated Collection Facilities where consumers can dispose of their household WEEE free of charge. The cost of joining depends on the value of your annual WEEE sales.
- You can offer in-store take-back of old equipment when consumers buy a similar replacement item, either directly at your premises or at local collection points. WEEE should be accepted within a reasonable period following a sale (eg 28 days). Collected WEEE must be made available free-of-charge to Producer Compliance Schemes³ for treatment and recycling. It is your responsibility to arrange and pay for its transport to an Approved Authorised Treatment Facility.

If taking WEEE back in-store, contact your regulator to see whether any waste licensing requirements apply (eg registering an exemption).

- You can provide an alternative free take-back service or collection facility which is available and accessible to your customers. Any WEEE deposited there must be managed in accordance with the Regulations.

PROVIDE CONSUMER INFORMATION

You can provide information by:

- displaying posters in-store;
- providing leaflets with purchases;
- giving details on your website;
- including it in catalogues and brochures.

The DTS provides its members with information in a standard format. Non-members will need to put together their own information, or seek advice from the VCA.

³ See EN760 *The WEEE Regulations and producers of electrical and electronic equipment.*

SOURCES OF HELP AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Envirowise:

Envirowise can help your business understand how to respond to WEEE in a way that minimises resources and costs.

- Free publications including other fact sheets and GG765 *An introduction to WEEE and RoHS*
- Expert advice on cleaner design - www.envirowise.gov.uk/cleanerdesign

For specific compliance advice, please contact:

BIS (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills) - www.berr.gov.uk/sectors/sustainability/weee/page30269.html

NetRegs - www.netregs.gov.uk

VCA (distributor obligations) - www.vca.gov.uk/enforcement/weee-enforcement.asp

Valpak (Distributor Take-back Scheme) - www.valpak.co.uk/dts

