

UNDERSTANDING THE WEEE REGULATIONS

THE REGULATIONS

Implemented in 2007, the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations set about increasing the reuse and recycling of waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) by reducing the amount of WEEE going to landfill.

The regulations aim to improve the environmental performance of businesses that manufacture, supply, use, recycle and recover EEE. You may have obligations under the WEEE Regulations if you are a business with electrical or electronic equipment to dispose of, or if you sell electrical or electronic equipment.

The WEEE directive covers a wide range of electrical and electronic products including TVs, DVD and video recorders, IT equipment, medical devices and monitoring and control instruments.

The Regulations affect all parties in the electronics industry in one way or another but the primary groups are producers who become responsible for financing the end-of-life treatment of their products, and distributors who become responsible in some cases for taking-back end-of-life products when new products are purchased.

LAMP RECYCLING FOR PRODUCERS

A producer is the party which first puts Electrical or Electronic Equipment (EEE) onto the UK market, whether they are manufacturers of EEE, private brand distributors or importers. The primary responsibility is to finance the environmentally sound disposal of their products at end-of-life.

A producer is any person who:

- Manufactures and sells EEE under own brand
- Resells under own brand, equipment produced by another supplier
- Imports or exports electrical and electronic equipment on a professional basis into a member state

Under the WEEE Regulations, producers have responsibility for the EEE placed on the market and must make sure it is disposed of in an environmentally sound way. The UK regulations require all producers to join a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS), or establish their own scheme, who will discharge their obligations as a producer of EEE.

All EEE put onto the market must be marked (using the crossed out wheeled bin logo) to assist with separate collection at end of life identifying the product as WEEE. Information must also be made available to treatment facilities in respect of new types of EEE they put on the market.



DISTRIBUTOR'S OBLIGATIONS

Under the WEEE regulations there are additional obligations for distributors and users of EEE related to disposal when it becomes waste (WEEE). Under the Regulations, retailers and other distributors of EEE to households are obliged to provide a take-back mechanism for the collection of end of life lamps 'in-store' or by joining the government sponsored distributor take-back scheme (DTS).

Distributors and users of non-household EEE are also responsible for disposing of end-of-life products in a responsible way, although in-store take back does not have to be provided by the distributor.



WHAT ABOUT REGULATION 9.2

This is a clause in the WEEE regulations that allows producers to pass all their obligations for recycling on to their B2B customers – but only if there is a clear agreement between producer and the final business end user.

Given the complex, multi-level distribution networks that exist in our industry, we are convinced that this does not work for lamps. What is more, by passing the liability onto your customer, you are giving them a problem (how to recycle), rather than a solution (recycling available through Recolight).

ENFORCING THE WEEE REGULATIONS

The Environment Agency for England and Wales, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (the enforcement agencies) are responsible for ensuring that all eligible producers and suppliers register with a compliance scheme such as Recolight. The compliance scheme is then responsible for the producers' obligations and for getting data from its members on EEE put onto the market and for reporting on WEEE collected and recycled.

LAMPS COVERED

Gas Discharge Lamps (GDIs) are included within the scope of these Regulations (category 13) and are identified under the Hazardous Waste regulations as hazardous waste.

GDIs include:

- fluorescent tubes
- compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)*
- mercury,
- metal halide
- sodium SON and SOX lamps

Most of these lamp types are used in both household and non-household applications. What are not included in the scope of WEEE are filament lamps such as standard light bulbs (known as GLS lamps) and Halogen lamps.

As of May 2009, LEDs have been classed by the Environment Agency as in scope for the WEEE regulations. They will also be specifically named in the scope of the recast of the WEEE Directive, due to be finalised in 2010/11. As a result, companies importing or producing LED and OLED lamps need to comply with the WEEE regulations now.

Recolight is focused on waste lamps, Lumicom is the specialist compliance scheme for waste luminaires** , please visit www.lumicom.co.uk.

* New energy saving CFL lamps are also classified as hazardous waste because of the small amount of mercury contained in each lamp. Under the WEEE Regulations they must be recycled instead of going to landfill.
** Luminaires is the term used to describe a complete lighting unit consisting of a lamp or lamps and also the parts which help to position, protect or connect the lamps

Recolight

ABOUT US

Established by the lighting industry in 2005, in accordance with the WEEE Regulations, Recolight is a not for profit company that takes on its members' responsibilities to collect and recycle their lamps at end-of-life. In the two years to June 2009 Recolight funded the collection and recycling of over 50 million Gas Discharge Lamps, helping to prevent nearly a fifth of a tonne of mercury from entering landfill.

Recolight provides a range of free services to businesses to make lamp recycling as simple and efficient as possible. Recolight is actively looking to expand its collection network which organisations can join for free. Approximately 250 of the existing Recolight collection points are open, providing collection to anyone.

Recolight is unique in the WEEE industry, in undertaking recycling far in excess of its legal obligations. This reflects the organisation's (and its members') genuine commitment to maximising the recycling of lamps.

To join email info@recolight.co.uk or visit our website at www.recolight.co.uk

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