



Department of Trade and Industry

BPR 425
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SS

Tel +44 (0)20 7 215 0972
Fax +44 (0)20 7215 5846
Enquiries +44 (0)20 7215 5000
Minicom +44 (0)20 7215 6740
www.dti.gov.uk
Chris.Tollady@dti.gsi.gov.uk

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Dear Sir/Madam

Implementation of the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (the WEEE Directive)

I am writing to update you on progress towards implementation of the WEEE Directive.

The Government plans to make the WEEE Regulations to transpose the main provisions of the Directive into UK law in the next few weeks. At the same time, it will publish non-statutory Guidance to accompany the legislation. However, after careful consideration, the Government has decided to implement the WEEE Directive's producer responsibility and retailer take-back obligations in respect of WEEE in June 2006, instead of in January 2006.

This decision reflects the Government's concerns that an adequate UK network of facilities for separate collection of WEEE should be in place for householders to use. This is a key practical requirement for the implementation of the Directive. Whilst much progress has been made towards this, it is clear that a UK-wide network of WEEE collection facilities will not be ready by the start of next year.

The Government continues to support the initiative of the British Retail Consortium in developing a retail compliance scheme for Government approval, which will support a UK WEEE collection network, including offering funding to Local Authorities for upgrades to civic amenity sites to enable the separate collection of WEEE in the future.

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The Government will also work further with the Environment Agencies to prepare for their role in registering producers. Registration is now expected to take place in January and February 2006. It is planned to publish the detailed arrangements for registration this autumn, in order to give producers time to prepare to submit their registrations.

The Government accepts that deferral of producer responsibility for WEEE may have implications for Local Authorities due to the Landfill Regulations Waste Acceptance Criteria which now apply to any waste, including some WEEE (products containing cathode ray tubes – televisions and computer monitors - and fluorescent lamps), which may be separately collected and classed as hazardous and which is then sent to hazardous landfill. DTI, DEFRA and the Agencies will provide guidance to stakeholders and seek to minimise the level of any additional costs. DTI has undertaken to meet any additional costs to Local Authorities in relation to this hazardous WEEE in line with the new burdens principle and is taking forward practical arrangements for this.

The Government will implement the WEEE Directive's requirements to mark electrical and electronic equipment, to facilitate its separate collection from other forms of waste, from the entry into force of the WEEE Regulations. It is aware that businesses are already working towards introduction of marking this summer.

I shall be in touch again shortly, via a further update letter, about the WEEE Regulations.

Yours sincerely

C Tollady