

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part II gives certain guidelines that are clearly applicable to the disposal of IT equipment.

Section 75 of the Act defines materials from industry and commerce that are discarded, intended to be discarded or are required to be discarded by the holder, as "controlled waste".

Section 34 introduces a statutory duty of care for those producing controlled waste; waste must not be passed to unlicensed persons or companies.

Section 33 emphasises the importance of proper disposal in that it makes Officers and Directors of a company criminally liable for disposal of controlled waste " in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health".

The bulk of IT equipment is uneconomic to recycle in its' own right and landfill may be seen as the "cheap" option for disposal. However, computer housings which appear quite harmless being predominantly made from ABS, polycarbonate, high impact polystyrene or PVC, may contain halogenated fire retardents. The PVC, used for housing and cable coverings, contains chloroparaffins as softeners. Monitor tubes are constructed with glass containing 23% lead oxide for radiation shielding, and finally the screen luminophors contain cadmium, zinc and various types of batteries which may include cadmium, lead, lithium, mercury and nickel in their construction.

If not treated properly, these hazardous materials pose significant threats to the environment through potential dispersion to air and ground water.

In terms of the monitors Aurom also has agreements in place with Europe's leading disposer of such products where the toxic chemicals are removed and disposed of environmentally and the glass is recycled.