

LEGISLATION

DEFRA is currently drafting legislation to enact recent amendments to the European Waste Catalogue (1). The EU required enforcement in the UK 1st January 2002.

Discarded electrical and electronic equipment containing cathode ray tube glass, mercury switches, or lead and Ni-Cad batteries will be classified as hazardous waste. All hazardous waste producer sites will require to be registered with Environment Agency.

ICER have estimated (2) that, in the UK, 398,000 tonnes per annum of data processing and electronic office equipment are disposed of annually and that only 25% of this is recycled, the remainder goes to land fill. In the European Union, the total for post consumer waste electrical and electronic equipment is estimated to be about 7 million tonnes per annum.

The EU Environment Directorate, DG ENV, has proposed a reuse and recycling and minimising the negative environmental impacts linked to the disposal of WEEE containing certain pollutants, including cadmium, chromium (6+), lead, mercury and halogenated fire retardant. The Council of Ministers agreed a Common position on the WEEE Directive on 7th June 2001 and was presented to Parliament in the Autumn Session. European legislation is expected to progress quickly with UK legislation soon to follow.

References

1. European Commission Decision 2001/118/EEC of 16th January 2001 as regards list of wastes chapter 16, section 02/13.
2. A risings of end of life electrical and electronic equipment –ICER, March 1998.
3. All copyright is acknowledged.