

NEWS RELEASE
25 September 2008

Batteries Get Boxed as New Recycling Law Takes Effect
Retailers Must Accept Waste Batteries Back from Consumers for Free

New EU battery recycling regulations come in force tomorrow (26 September) which aim to recycle one in every four portable batteries by 2012 with a target of 45% of all waste batteries to be recycled by 2016. WEEE Ireland, the authorised compliance scheme for electronic and battery recycling in Ireland, is currently rolling out its battery recycling programme which will see 50,000 waste battery drop-off boxes being delivered to 10,000 retail outlets throughout the country.

Under the new regulations, any retail outlet which sells batteries will be obliged to take-back waste batteries of similar type sold at that outlet at no charge or obligation on the consumer to purchase new batteries. Leaking waste batteries will not be accepted back at retail outlets but can be deposited at any of 80 local authority recycling centres around the country.

Over the last 3 months, WEEE Ireland ran a trial battery recycling scheme in Tullamore where more than a quarter of a tonne of portable batteries were collected.

Batteries which fall under the scheme include portable batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, button etc), mobile phone and laptop batteries, batteries embedded in cordless electronic devices and car batteries. It is estimated that over 2,000 tonnes of batteries are sold in Ireland each year – the equivalent in weight terms of 80 million AA batteries – with most being discarded in rubbish bins instead of being recycled due their small size.

Outlets such as convenience stores, supermarkets, jewellers, hardware stores and garages will all be provided with drop-off boxes to facilitate consumers who wish to dispose of waste batteries. WEEE Ireland expects to extend its battery recycling scheme to include schools, hospitals and offices over the coming months.

After initial sorting in Ireland, waste batteries collected will be transported to Europe where they will undergo final treatment and safe recycling at dedicated battery recycling plants.

By recycling and preventing batteries from going to landfill, consumers will protect both the environment and human health from potentially hazardous chemicals. Given the metal components and materials contained in batteries, they are one of the few product lines which are almost fully recyclable as much of the components can be reused in the manufacturing of new batteries or other products.

“The EU targets set for battery recycling levels are high however, we are confident that Irish consumers will once again show diligence in recycling batteries as they have with so many other streams of electrical and domestic waste. Due to their size, batteries tend to be hoarded and traditionally have slipped through the recycling net. With the support of producers, retailers and trade associations in rolling out this new initiative, batteries of all kinds can be deposited by consumers for free at specified drop-off points where WEEE Ireland will organise for their collection and safe recycling”, said Leo Donovan, CEO, WEEE Ireland.

About WEEE Ireland

WEEE Ireland is the largest of two authorised national compliance schemes for electrical and battery recycling in Ireland. The scheme was founded in 2005 by producers of electrical and electronic appliances to comply with the WEEE Directive. WEEE Ireland organises the processing and recycling of household waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and waste batteries from recycling centres, electrical retailers and other collection points covering over 80% of the geographic area of the Republic of Ireland.

Any household item that requires a plug or battery to function and is at the end of its life is considered waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). Such items can be deposited at any of 80 civic amenity sites nationwide for free recycling. Location details and opening hours of recycling centres throughout the country are available at: www.weeeireland.ie In addition, consumers can take back old electrical items to electrical retail shops when equivalent items are being purchased or bring their WEEE to one of the many public collection events WEEE Ireland runs throughout the country.

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