



## **Draft Waste Battery Regulations Published**

### **Implementation of the Batteries Directive will Provide Comprehensive Free Take Back System – Gormley**

Mr. John Gormley T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, today (3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008) published draft regulations to implement the new EU Directive on Waste Batteries. The Directive aims to minimise the negative environmental impacts of batteries. The Directive will apply to all types of batteries irrespective of their shape, weight, composition or use.

To achieve these objectives, the Directive introduces measures to curtail excess levels of mercury, lead and cadmium in batteries placed on the market from 26 September 2008 onwards. The Directive also requires producers to be responsible for the financing of the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of waste batteries from 26 September 2008. It means that holders of waste batteries will be entitled to leave that waste back free of charge, either to the place of purchase or to other authorised collection points from that date onwards.

“The environmental concerns related to batteries are linked to the materials they contain. This is particularly the case for mercury, lead and cadmium as batteries containing these metals are defined as hazardous. We must divert them from landfill”, said Minister Gormley. The Minister reminded consumers to plan their battery usage requirements and to use rechargeable batteries instead, adding “rechargeable batteries are not only better value for money, but minimise waste arisings as well”. Recent developments in nickel-metal hydride (NiMH) rechargeable batteries make their use not only feasible but attractive as they can be charged 1,000 times, have up to three time the capacity of a similar sized nickel-cadmium (NiCd) battery and have no memory effect.

The draft regulations are a result of consultation with stakeholders working together on the Batteries Working Group. This group, which was established in July 2006, includes representatives of the battery industry, retailers, manufacturers, IBEC, SIMI, the waste management sector, local authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Batteries Working Group has been working on the development of an efficient system for the management of waste batteries and to ensure the use of hazardous materials in electronic components is restricted in accordance with the new Batteries Directive. It is also developing proposals for a Producer Responsibility Initiative for waste batteries, whereby the producers of batteries will be obliged to put in place systems to ensure that such waste is collected and recycled to the greatest extent possible.

Minister Gormley concluded by thanking the representatives of the battery industry, retailers, manufacturers, IBEC, SIMI, the waste management sector, local authorities and the EPA for their and their input in developing proposals and systems for the battery take back system. "I am now asking all of the stakeholders, producers, retailers and consumers to look at the proposals and submit their observations. Written submissions on the Regulations which are available on the Department's website ([www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)) must be with the Department by **Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008**.

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