

## **WEEE treatment**

This document provides a quick summary for all interested parties about our current national compliance campaign at sites which store and treat waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE).

## **Requirements**

WEEE must be treated using “**Best available treatment, recovery and recycling techniques**” (BATRRT) under Article 6 of the WEEE Directive (2000/96/EC). Treatment must as a minimum include removal of all fluids and appropriate selective treatments for WEEE and components as specified in Annex II of the Directive. The treatments must not breach the “relevant objectives” of the Waste Framework Directive (reproduced below) or endanger the Health and Safety of the site workers.

*“Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that waste management is carried out without endangering human health, without harming the environment and, in particular:*

- (a) without risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals;*
- (b) without causing a nuisance through noise or odours; and*
- (c) without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest.”*

In 2006 Defra produced guidance on the “Best Available Treatment Recovery and Recycling Techniques” (BATRRT) for WEEE. BATRRT is an extension of the principles of Best Available Techniques (BAT) under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive. BATRRT applies to all sites treating WEEE in England, Wales and Scotland.

**All sites which treat WEEE must have an appropriate environmental permit or exemption to do so. The use of BATRRT is a permit condition/ exemption requirement.**

## **WEEE treatment guidance for Environment Agency officers**

Concerns have been raised by Industry and officers that some sites are not adhering to the requirements of BATRRT. We are currently looking at sites that store and treat WEEE to establish whether they are complying with BATRRT. Where we are identifying issues we are raising these with officers and Industry to ensure they are dealt with in a consistent manner and to appropriate timescales.

To help this process we are developing a series of internal ‘quick guides’ for compliance officers for specific WEEE waste streams to ensure consistency of standards. Whilst these are internally focussed to aid compliance activities, they may be shared with Industry or other interested parties during their development to ensure consistent standards of operation.

## **Compliance guidance for specific WEEE waste streams**

The following documents have been produced or are currently in development:

**Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs) and display equipment containing CRTs.** This is to ensure that TVs and monitors are handled effectively during storage/bulking up operations to prevent breakage and uncontrolled release of fluorescent coatings/ leaded dust. The processing of the CRTs must remove the fluorescent coatings in the CRT as separate fraction in accordance with BATRRT. We are requiring sites to comply with these existing BATRRT requirements as soon as possible and by 25<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at the latest.

## Information on the treatment of WEEE

**Refrigeration equipment and cooling appliances.** This is to ensure fridges and other items containing refrigerants (e.g. air conditioning units, de-humidifiers etc) are identified, stored and handled appropriately to prevent damage and resultant escape of refrigerant gases or oil leakage. Any degassing or draining must be carried out using appropriate equipment to effectively remove gases and oil. Records must be kept of the types /quantities collected in accordance with BATRRT.

**Fluorescent tubes.** This will require appropriate BATRRT standards to prevent tube breakage resulting in uncontrolled releases of mercury during the collection, storage and crushing phases.

**Liquid Crystal Display units.** Currently in development, to ensure compliance with BATRRT mercury removal requirements, also covered by the regulatory position below.

**Small mixed WEEE.** Currently in development to ensure this mixed fraction is treated appropriately to remove fluids and components required under BATRRT to facilitate their recovery as separate fractions and prevent contamination of the processed output streams.

**Large domestic appliances.** Currently in development to ensure these large items are treated as for small mixed WEEE above in accordance with BATRRT.

### **More information:**

For more information on WEEE treatment see our website here <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/waste/32102.aspx> or contact your local officer.

### **Current Regulatory Position Statements relevant to WEEE treatment:**

**Treatment of Liquid Crystal Display units** A recent WRAP report has highlighted concerns over mechanically breaking flat screens with gas discharge backlights. This is due to the potential for breakage of the lamps and resultant uncontrolled release/dispersion of mercury into the waste stream/environment. Operators have until 1st June 2012 to demonstrate that any mechanical treatment methods can adequately contain the mercury present in the lamps to a similar standard as obtained via manual dismantling. You can find more information here [http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/MWRP\\_RPS\\_111\\_LCD\\_treatment\\_-\\_Aug\\_2011.pdf](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/MWRP_RPS_111_LCD_treatment_-_Aug_2011.pdf)

### **The dismantling of WEEE for the re-use and recovery of its component parts**

This extends the scope of the current Para 40 and T11 exemptions for repair and refurbishment to also allow WEEE components to be treated for reuse and recovery in accordance with BATRRT. You can find more information here. [http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/MWRP\\_RPS\\_049\\_Dismantling\\_of\\_WEEE\\_v2\\_July\\_2010.pdf](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Business/MWRP_RPS_049_Dismantling_of_WEEE_v2_July_2010.pdf)