

HAZARDOUS WASTE REGULATIONS (NI) 2005
HAZARDOUS WASTE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



WASTE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT (WEEE)

Introduction

Hazardous waste is subject to the requirements of the European Hazardous Waste Directive (91/689/EEC) which was transposed into Northern Ireland legislation by The Hazardous Waste Regulations (NI) 2005 and The List of Wastes Regulations (NI) 2005. All wastes have a European-wide code assigned to them in the European Waste Catalogue (EWC 2002) which is contained in [Technical Guidance WM2](#). The WM2 manual has been developed to provide guidance on the assessment and classification of hazardous waste.

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations (NI) 2006 is a new piece of legislation that aims to reduce the amount of electrical waste going to landfill by introducing targets for WEEE recovery, re-use and recycling.

This guidance document is aimed at helping trade and industry to assess potentially hazardous WEEE and classify it by using EWC 2002.

Householders

As a private householder who uses Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE), the WEEE Regulations encourage you to play your part in the separate collection of redundant WEEE. You can do this in several ways:

- Retailers **may** offer "in-store" take-back where they must accept your old equipment on a like-for-like (old for new) basis when you make a replacement purchase of new equivalent equipment.
- Your local Council may provide home collections of WEEE especially if items are bulky.
- You may deposit your WEEE in specific areas at civic amenity sites across Northern Ireland.

Please contact the relevant retailers and your local Council for further information.

General classification for WEEE in EWC 2002

The WEEE stream is a complex mixture of materials and components, some of which are hazardous and must be handled in compliance with the Hazardous Waste Regulations (NI) 2005.

Many items of WEEE are assessed on the dangerous substances in their component parts. If these are found to be hazardous then the whole piece of equipment will be classed as a hazardous waste and assigned the following EWC classification:

16 02 13* Discarded equipment containing hazardous components other than those mentioned in 16 02 09 to 16 02 12

NOTE: Items of WEEE that contain, PCB's, ozone depleting substances and free asbestos have their own classification assigned to them in the EWC, (see page 2 and 3).

Hazardous WEEE that has been collected separately arising from municipal sites (i.e. generally domestic/household waste) – with the exception of CFC and mercury containing wastes (see page 3 and 4) – is classified in the EWC as:

20 01 35* Discarded electrical and electronic equipment other than those mentioned in 20 01 21 and 20 01 23 containing hazardous components

If the hazardous components of an item of WEEE have been removed the remaining parts of the WEEE will be non-hazardous. The hazardous components (apart from batteries) that have been removed are classified in the EWC as an absolute entry:

16 02 15* Hazardous components removed from discarded (WEEE) equipment

EWC Classification for specific categories of hazardous WEEE

1. WEEE containing batteries

Equipment such as mobile phones, laptops and rechargeable power tools all contain batteries, some of which may be classed as being hazardous. WEEE containing hazardous batteries will be classed as a hazardous waste if the batteries remain in the equipment. If this WEEE is from a municipal source or separately collected by or on behalf of the local Council it will be assigned the EWC code **20 01 35***, otherwise use **16 02 13***.

Please refer to the guidance document on batteries (**HAZGUIDE NI 04**) for a list of hazardous batteries and the applicable EWC code to assign if they are removed from the WEEE.

2. Capacitors and PCB components

Some capacitors, transformers and fluorescent light ballast may contain polychlorinated biphenyls (**PCBs**). PCBs persist in the environment and can move into the food chain. They are therefore classified as being eco-toxic with a threshold level of 50mg/kg (0.005%). The European Union is committed to the eventual

destruction of all PCBs. This means that anyone who holds PCBs contaminated equipment containing more than 5dm³ (5 litres) or any other PCBs with concentrations of greater than 0.005% must register them with the Environment and Heritage Service, (see [Guidance & Forms](#) section of EHS website for further information). PCBs will not have been fitted in domestic appliances since 1986, so unless it can be proven otherwise, it must be assumed that pre-1986 capacitors contain PCB's.

The classification of PCBs in the EWC relates to whether parts or whole pieces of equipment are being dealt with:

16 02 09* Transformers and capacitors containing PCBs

16 02 10* Discarded equipment containing or contaminated by PCBs other than those mentioned in 16 02 09

3. Equipment containing ozone depleting substances (ODS)

ODS are found in most refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment as the refrigerant in the coolant/oil or blowing agent in the insulation foam. The most common ODS (i.e. CFC, HCFC, and HFC) are classed as being eco-toxic with a threshold limit of 0.1%. Unless it can be proven otherwise, it can be presumed that refrigeration and air-conditioning appliances older than 10 years contain ODS and must be treated as a hazardous waste.

Wastes containing ODS which arise from trade and industry will generally be classed under the EWC code:

16 02 11* Discarded equipment containing chlorofluorocarbons, HCFC, HFC

Domestic fridge-freezers containing CFCs which are separately collected at municipal sites are assigned the following EWC code:

20 01 23* Discarded equipment containing chlorofluorocarbons

Any other WEEE collected at municipal sites which contain ODS other than CFCs can be classed under the EWC code **20 01 35***

4. Equipment containing free-asbestos

Equipment older than 20 years such as electric coffee pots, toasters, irons and old storage heaters may contain asbestos in the thermal pads. Asbestos is a category 1 carcinogen and therefore has a threshold limit of 0.1% where the individual chemical form is present (see [HAZGUIDE NI 02](#) for more information on asbestos).

WEEE containing asbestos at these levels is classified in the EWC as:

16 02 12* Discarded equipment containing free asbestos

5. WEEE containing mercury

Mercury is used in gas discharge lamps, in medical equipment, data transmission, telecommunications, and mobile phones. It has also been used in batteries, thermostats, position sensors, relays and switches. Its use in EEE has declined significantly in recent years, and been banned since 1 July 2006 (although certain uses are exempted).

Batteries containing mercury that have been removed from WEEE are classed as an absolute hazardous waste and given the EWC code **16 06 03***.

Equipment containing mercury is classed as hazardous and can be assigned the EWC code:

20 01 21* Fluorescent tubes and other mercury-containing waste

(Fluorescent tubes contain mercury which ionises to emit ultraviolet light. Further information can be obtained from **HAZGUIDE NI 03**).

6. Televisions and computer monitors

Televisions and computer monitors that contain cathode ray tubes are classed as hazardous waste. Their hazardous nature is due to the conductive phosphor powder that generates the image on the inside of the glass screen. This coating contains heavy metal oxides (e.g. lead, chromium, cobalt, nickel and arsenic).

Discarded televisions and computer monitors that arise from a municipal source or collected separately by or on behalf of the local Council will be assigned the EWC code **20 01 35***.

If they are from any other source they will fall under the EWC code **16 02 13***.

If the cathode ray tube and activated glass panels have been removed from the equipment they will be classed as an absolute hazardous waste and given the EWC code **16 02 15***.

For further information contact:

Environment & Heritage Service
Hazardous Waste/TFS Section
Land & Resource Management
1st Floor, Klondyke Building
Ormeau Road, Belfast
BT7 2JA
Telephone: 02890 569710
Fax: 02890 569310

Or visit www.ehsni.gov.uk and click onto the **Waste** link to obtain information on relevant waste legislation, a full list of downloadable Hazardous Waste Guidance Documents (**HAZGUIDE NI**), WM2 and other useful publications.

IMPORTANT NOTES PLEASE READ

This guidance document has been produced by the Environment and Heritage Service based on information contained in The Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 and on current understanding. This document may be subject to change in the light of regulatory changes, future Government guidance or experience of regulating this type of waste. It must be stressed that this document is for guidance only and it remains the responsibility of the waste producer or holder to establish the waste's status as "hazardous".