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WEEELABEX

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment – Label of Excellence

An Initiative of the WEEE Forum co-financed by the European Commission's LIFE Programme (LIFE07 ENV/B/000041)

Foreword

The WEEE Forum is a European association of 37 electrical and electronic waste collection and recovery systems. Its mission is to provide for a platform for co-operation and exchange of best practices, and in so doing, optimise the cost-effectiveness of the operations of the member organisations and strive for excellence and continuous improvement in environmental performance (see www.weee-forum.org).

WEEELABEX stands for “WEEE LABEL of EXcellence”. It is the acronym for a project, run by the WEEE Forum in co-operation with stakeholders and co-financed by the European Community under the LIFE programme. On the one hand, WEEELABEX aims at laying down a set of normative requirements with respect to collection, logistics and treatment of all kinds of WEEE, while, on the other hand, setting up rules for certification and monitoring of compliance with those requirements. Harmonisation of the WEEE requirements will make environmental performance more transparent, diminish trade barriers between member states, assure the highest level of environmental performance of the WEEE systems and promote a common technical understanding, while obviously not holding back parties that wish to go beyond those standards for environmental reasons. It will create incentives for operators to meet the highest standards,

Early 2009, the WEEE Forum and its stakeholders started discussing the first draft of the WEEELABEX standard on the management of WEEE and its basic principles. As a result of broad review process during 2009 the WEEE Forum General Assembly approved version 5.0 of the requirements on 20 November 2009 and decided that the standard be split into three different normative documents. The splitting should allow specific requirements for homogeneous target groups and specific implementation strategies.

The code of practice on collection is one of the three split normative documents, addressing collection point operators and their activities, excluding treatment and logistics.

Upon approval of the three normative documents, the normative requirements will be lodged with CENELEC, the European committee for electrotechnical standardisation. The WEEE Forum, who became a co-operating organisation within CENELEC on 25 August 2009, will continue to contribute to the development of the WEEELABEX standard into an EN standard.

The question of how the standard will be implemented is part of another WEEELABEX activity. It is the WEEE Forum’s intention to find appropriate implementation strategies for all the target groups and activities. The clarification and development of these implementation procedures will take place in 2010.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON COLLECTION OF WEEE

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Introduction

The WEEELABEX code of practice lays down measures related to the protection of the environment and human health and safety through the prevention and mitigation of the adverse impacts of collection, storage and handling of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). It defines both technical and management requirements for operators, which can be integrated into other management requirements and assist organisations achieve demands with respect to correct handling of WEEE. Compliance with the WEEELABEX code of practice cannot infer immunity from legal obligations. This code of practice is not intended to create trade barriers nor to increase or decrease an organisation's legal obligations. It is intended that this code of practice will apply to all types and sizes of organisations and accommodate diverse geographical, cultural and social conditions.

The structure of the code of practice is in accordance with the general rules for the structure and drafting of normative documents. Clauses 1, 2, and 3 introduce and format the document. Clause 4 refers to the management principle for all operators. Clause 5 covers the technical requirements of the activities on collection points. Some specific requirements for gas discharge lamps and for monitors and screens will be completed during the next steps on the project.

This code of practice will be reviewed or amended when considered appropriate. Reviews will be conducted in response to new developments in legislation, evolving technologies in the WEEE organisations or work practises to ensure continuing compatibility.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This code of practice is applicable to all WEEE and components before being treated, i.e before the first physical modifications.
- 1.2 This code of practice addresses all collection operations from the take-back of WEEE, the preparation for re-use, handling, sorting, storage and transport until the logistic centre or the first treatment step.
- 1.3 This code of practice addresses all collection operators that perform operations according to Paragraph 1.2, regardless of size, main focus of activities, geographic location, structure of the WEEE business, or legal status of the operator's business.
- 1.4 This code of practice is applicable to the territory of member states of the European Union and the EFTA countries.
- 1.5 This code of practice aims to:
 - achieve effective and efficient collection, sorting, storage, transportation of all kinds of WEEE in order to prevent pollution and minimise emissions.
 - prevent inappropriate disposal of WEEE.
 - assure protection of human health and safety.
 - prevent illegal (cross boundary) shipments of WEEE.
 - prevent shipments of WEEE, that, although being legal, are a breach of the objectives of this code of practice
 - create a level playing field for fair competition of all actors in the operation of WEEE

This will be achieved through:

- the harmonisation of monitoring, measuring and reporting in order to promote environmentally sound collection, handling, sorting, storage and transport (demonstration of legal compliance),
- specification of existing legal rules, principles and best practices and
- clarification of any ambiguous principles within legislative instruments

2. Normative References

Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 2003 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). (Official Journal of the European Union (OJ) L 37, 13.2.2003).

Proposal for a recast of Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 2003 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) {SEC(2008) 2933} {SEC(2008) 2934}. *In the text, reference is made to Directive XXXX/YY/EC (recast of Directive 2002/96/EC on WEEE).*

Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.2008).

Regulation 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 on shipments of waste (OJ, L 190/1, 12.7.2006). Regulation as last amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No 1379/2007 (OJ L 309, 27.11.2007, p. 7).

Council Directive 92/3/Euratom of 3 February 1992 on the supervision and control of shipments of radioactive waste between Member States and into and out of the Community.

3. Definitions

3.1 collection

gathering of WEEE, including the preliminary sorting and preliminary storage for the purposes of transport to a WEEE treatment facility in accordance with Article 3(10) of Directive 2008/98/EC. Gathering includes picking up from final holders, distribution and take-back facilities, and collection facilities for WEEE, as well as transport to other collection facilities, logistic, storage or sorting centres where transports to treatment facilities will start.

3.2 collection facility

place designated for receiving and taking back WEEE in order to sort, store and transport to treatment facilities or other logistic organisations.

3.3 component

in the sense of this document is an element of an appliance with a distinct proper function, which has been removed from the device as a larger unit, but is not yet physically destroyed. Typical components of WEEE are batteries, capacitors, printed circuit boards, CRT, hard disks. Mechanically treated components become fractions.

3.4 hazardous waste

waste which displays one or more of the hazardous properties listed in Annex III of the Directive 2008/98/EC. Hazardous WEEE includes:

- WEEE appliances classified as hazardous wastes
- substances separated from WEEE that are classified as hazardous wastes
- fractions or components containing substances classified as hazardous wastes

3.5 logistics

is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient and effective flow of WEEE in order to achieve appropriate treatment. Logistics involves the integration of sorting, handling, storage and transportation to the first treatment operator.

3.6 operator

an entity performing operations with WEEE in accordance with the scope of this code of practice, such as collection, handling, shipping, sorting, storage, transport, trading, treatment or preparation for re-use.

3.7 preparing for re-use

checking, cleaning or repairing recovery operations, by which products or components of products that have become waste are prepared so that they can be re-used without any other pre-processing, in accordance with Article 3(16) of Directive 2008/98/EC.

3.8 re-use

means any operation by which products or components that are not waste are used again for the same purpose for which they were conceived, in accordance with Article 3(13) of Directive 2008/98/EC.

3.9 treatment

recovery or disposal operations, including any preparation prior to recovery or disposal, in accordance with Article 3(14) of Directive 2008/98/EC.

3.10 waste

any substance or object that the holder discards or intends or is required to discard, in accordance with Article 3(1) of Directive 2008/98/EC.

3.11 WEEE

electrical or electronic equipment which is waste within the meaning of Article 3.1 of Directive 2008/98/EC, including all components, subassemblies and consumables which are part of the product at the time of discarding, in accordance with Directive XXXX/YY/EC (recast of Directive 2002/96/EC on WEEE).

3.12 WEEE collection categories

WEEE sorted, based on treatment requirements¹.

¹

Most commonly used WEEE collection categories are: large household appliances, cooling and freezing appliances, small and medium appliances, CRT appliances, flat screen appliances, gas discharge lamps

4. Management requirements

4.1 Legal compliance

- 4.1.1 The operator shall comply with European Community legislation and its corresponding national and sub-national transposition as well as national and sub-national legislation. The operator shall maintain a record with legal and regulatory obligations applying to all activities undertaken on site.
- 4.1.2 The operator shall establish and maintain a procedure in order to identify legal requirements that are applicable to the environmental, health and safety aspects of all activities, services and products undertaken on site. A register of the operator's activities and related legal provisions shall be maintained and valid permits required by all relevant authorities shall be available.
- 4.1.3 If there are substantial differences between the code of practice and national or sub-national legislative or regulatory provisions, the stricter option shall be applicable.

4.2 Management principles

- 4.2.1 The precautionary principle shall apply where there is threat of serious or irreversible damage. Lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing feasible measures to prevent environmental degradation or adverse health and safety effects.
- 4.2.2 The principle of due diligence shall be assured with all activities. Due diligence includes a full understanding of all obligations to which the company is subject and full transparency with business partners.

4.3 Technical and infrastructural preconditions

- 4.3.1 The operator shall possess appropriate infrastructure in terms of size, technologies installed, and characteristics of the operations that are suitable for the activities performed on site. Suitability of site shall be assessed by an operational risk management process for all tasks performed on site and include identification of hazards, assessment of risk and, where appropriate, take the necessary steps to eliminate or reduce the risk, and recording of the findings.

4.4 Downstream monitoring

- 4.4.1 The operator shall trace and document the downstream logistic chain of WEEE. Documentation shall assure proper processing according to Clause 5 of this code of practice. If downstream operators comply with this code of practice approved by an independent entity, special documentation is not necessary.

- 4.4.2 Responsibility of downstream monitoring remains in cases where handing over of WEEE to dealers or brokers, or when shipped across borders.

4.5 Preparation for re-use

- 4.5.1 If the operator is involved in preparation for re-use activities, permits from authorities or agreements from producers or parties that act on their behalf shall be obtained. Suitable infrastructure and trained persons for the testing of appliances and the preparation for re-use procedures and records shall be available.
- 4.5.2 Preparation for re-use includes the selection, testing, documentation, and labelling in accordance with the provisions drafted in Directive YYYY/XX/EC (recast of Directive 2002/96/EC).
- 4.5.3 The documentation of preparation for re-use shall encompass all copies of the labels according to Section 4.7.2, all destinations and acceptors as well as a summary of amounts and types of waste electrical and electronic equipment prepared for re-use.

4.6 Shipments

- 4.6.1 WEEE which is intended for cross-border shipments shall be subject to Art. 10 of Directive YYYY/XX/EC (recast of Directive 2002/96/EC) and Regulation 1013/2006/EC on shipments of waste until the end-of-waste status is fulfilled in accordance with Article 6 of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste.
- 4.6.2 No operator shall initiate, contribute to or otherwise allow shipments of WEEE that would result in treatment that is not in compliance with the objectives of this code of practice.
- 4.6.3 WEEE containing radioactive wastes as defined in Article 2 of Council Directive 92/3/Euratom shall not be exported outside the European Community.
- 4.6.4 The minimum monitoring requirements for shipments as laid down in Annex I* of Directive YYYY/XX/EC (recast of Directive 2002/96/EC) on WEEE and Regulation 1013/2006 on WEEE shall be strictly adhered to.

5. Technical requirements

5.1 Handling and conveyance

- 5.1.1 WEEE shall be handled and stored with due care in order to avoid release of hazardous substances into air, water or soil as a result of damage and/or leakages.
- 5.1.2 During handling and storage special attention shall be given to:
- cooling and freezing appliances to avoid damage to the cooling system,
 - CRT appliances to avoid implosion and/or emissions of dust
 - fluorescent tubes, and other energy saving gas discharge lamps to prevent breakage resulting in the release of mercury
 - appliances containing oil and other liquids to avoid spillages and other emissions,
 - appliances containing lamps (sun beds, flat screens) to avoid breakage of lamps,
 - appliances containing asbestos (old heaters, stoves) to avoid mechanical load and release of asbestos fibres.
- 5.1.3 All handling of WEEE including the loading, unloading and transport shall be carried out with appropriate tools, containers and fixing to avoid damage to WEEE.
- 5.1.4 WEEE shall not be handled in such a way that subsequent de-pollution or recovery according to this code of practice is adversely affected or even inhibited.

5.2 Storage

- 5.2.1 Storage sites shall be designed and organised and maintained to provide safe access to and egress from the site and avoid access by unauthorised persons.
- 5.2.2 Storage areas of collection facilities require:
- impermeable surfaces shall be available for all WEEE storage areas
 - spillage collection facilities are necessary for all uncovered storage areas
 - weatherproof covering shall exist where cooling and freezing appliances, screens and monitors, and gas discharge lamps are stored
- Intermediate storage of cooling and freezing appliances without weatherproof covering is allowed for a maximum of one month.

5.3 Separate collection and sorting

- 5.3.1 During collection and transport, WEEE shall not be mixed with other types of waste within the same container or receptacles. Exceptions from this paragraph shall be

acceptable, provided the operator can assure re-separation before treatment or when required by national or sub-national guidelines.

- 5.3.2 Prior to treatment, WEEE shall be sorted into the WEEE collection categories or any other groups of WEEE based on legislation or agreed contractually with take-back organisations or other customers.

5.4 Documentation

- 5.4.1 Operators of collection facilities shall document the quantity of WEEE collected and forwarded by means of weight notes, piece count or documentation of number, size, and filling level of receptacles. Agreements regarding the location where weighing and data provision is foreseen shall be possible.
- 5.4.2 Electronic or hard copies of records shall be available for at least three years, unless authorities, WEEE take-back organisations or other customers stipulate a longer period.