

WEEE Ordinance

The Ordinance on Waste Prevention, Collection and Treatment of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE Ordinance) entered into force on 30 April 2005. The provisions regarding the take-back obligation and the obligation for providing financing by producers entered into force on 13 August 2005.

By means of the WEEE Ordinance Austria– as it applies to all Member States – has transposed two EU directives and pursues the following objectives:

- The possibility to return waste equipment from private households at collection points set up by the municipalities and at a final distributor's on a one-to-one basis (when selling EEE for private households if the returned equipment is of an equivalent type and has fulfilled the same function as the new equipment) free of charge.
- A rate of separate collection of at least 4 kg on average per inhabitant per year from private households must be achieved by 31 December 2006.
- The producers and importers are responsible for the environmentally sound recovery and treatment of the collected WEEE ("producer's responsibility"). Components involving a risk to the environment must be given a specific treatment. Ambitious rates of recovery are set which must be achieved by the end of the year 2006. Treatment principles specified in the Ordinance on Waste Treatment Obligations have to be complied with.
- Collection and recovery systems will act for the producers and importers, which will be co-ordinated by the ministry. Registration and notification obligations are provided for.
- The re-use of WEEE has a high priority. The hand on of still working WEEE as a whole to repair companies and other users shall be encouraged. So new jobs can be created and the value-added kept in Austria.
- For the take-back of WEEE on a one-to-one basis from "e-commerce" specific provisions regarding the set up of collection points were laid down.
- Austrian producers who deliver new equipment to final consumers in other Member States of the EU have also to register and report regarding this equipment. The regulations of the country of destination have to be complied with.
- Producers and importers are responsible for adequate public relations work to inform consumers and companies.
- The use of certain environmentally hazardous substances (eg lead, mercury, cadmium, certain flame retardants) in electrical and electronical equipment shall be banned (from July 2006).
- The regulations on refrigerators and lamps are replaced by the WEEE Ordinance. Costs for deposits, badges and vouchers will be reimbursed.