

The Batteries and Accumulators (Placing On The Market) Regulations 2008

Background To The Regulation

The UK has one of the lowest levels of battery recycling in Europe. No planned National infrastructure has existed for the treatment of waste and collection was on an ad-hoc basis. In September 2006 the European Parliament passed Directive 2006/66/EC to encourage the recycling of portable batteries by putting targets in place for the collection of waste, with incremental yearly increases. This revoked the previous Directive 91/157/EEC and other associated legislation. The new Directive placed a time limit onto Member States for implementation into national law by September 26th 2008. The draft 'Batteries and Accumulators (Placing on the Market) Regulations' have now been released and will be brought into UK law by the date specified.

Key Points

The Regulations limit the use of mercury and cadmium in cells. As a result, 'placing on the market' (Making available for sale) of Ni-Cd cells and batteries will be prohibited after the Regulations come into force. However there are some exclusions from the Regulations.

What Exclusions Apply?

Exclusions apply to batteries for the following uses; Emergency Lighting, Military, National Security, Medical equipment and Power Tools. We will continue to make batteries for all of the above applications indefinitely.

How Does It Affect Your Batteries?

All batteries and cells, irrespective of chemistry, will be labelled with the 'crossed out wheelie bin' symbol, and will need to be segregated for collection and recycling. The infrastructure for waste battery collection is currently being put into place - This does not include provision for returning used batteries as they are classified as hazardous waste for transportation purposes. Also, movement of waste batteries around the country would have an adverse ecological effect, contrary to the 'Environmental Protection' purpose of the legislation.

From 26th September, no new Ni-Cd batteries (Except those for excluded uses) can be produced using Ni-Cd cells.

Will All Batteries Of All Types And Chemistries Need To Comply?

Generally, yes, although items placed on the market in the form in which they are sold prior to 26th September 2008, for example Alkaline or Lithium primary batteries which were already held in stock by a UK based distributor, will not need to comply with the labelling requirements of the Regulations.

What Steps Do I Need To Take?

Where large volumes of waste batteries will accumulate, they must be separated by chemistry and stored for collection by a reputable waste handler, although your local council usually offers recycling for homeowners unfortunately all business waste is collected via the private sector. We recommend you hunt around for a competitive price as the rates vary considerably from company to company.

Can I Beat The Ban?

Items can be produced for delivery prior to 26th September. After that date, only orders for Ni-Cd batteries for the 'excluded uses' will be accepted.

If Your Batteries Aren't For An Excluded Purpose, please talk to us at Multicell. We can help you to changing your design to Ni-MH at minimal cost and effort.