

Enhanced Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment to be implemented July 1

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said, with the Product Eco-responsibility (Amendment) Bill 2023 passed on October 18, 2023, the enhanced Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WPRS) will be implemented on July 1 this year with the following enhancements:

1. Under the WPRS, the maximum storage volume of refrigerators will be increased from 500 litres to 900 litres, and the maximum washing capacity of washing machines from 10 kilograms to 15kg;
2. Stand-alone tumble dryers and dehumidifiers will be covered by the WPRS; and
3. The requirement for providing the recycling label in the distribution and sales of products under the WPRS will be removed.

Currently, when a customer purchases a new product under the WPRS (namely air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners or monitors), the seller is required under the law to arrange for the customer a free door-to-door removal of the old product of the same type. Starting from July 1, customers can enjoy this same free removal service under the law when purchasing the above-mentioned four additional products under the WPRS, i.e. refrigerators and dryers with larger capacities, stand-alone tumble dryers and dehumidifiers. The Government encourages the public to make good use of this service to ensure that old electrical equipment can be properly collected and treated so as to turn waste into resources. Members of the public not making a new purchase of products under the WPRS but need to recycle old electrical equipment can also make an appointment for a free collection service of old items through the recycling hotline 2676 8888 or through WhatsApp (6081 5096).

Moreover, starting from July 1, suppliers (including manufacturers and importers) distributing the above-mentioned four new types of products under the WPRS must first register with the EPD as a registered supplier before distributing such regulated products in Hong Kong. Failing to do so will result in committing an offence and the supplier will be liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 on conviction. Suppliers shall also pay the EPD the recycling levy for the regulated electrical equipment they have distributed. In order to streamline the operation, suppliers and sellers are no longer required to provide recycling labels in the distribution and sales of the regulated electronic equipment. Nevertheless, sellers are required to

continue with the current practice of providing customers with a receipt showing the prescribed wording on the recycling levies for identifying the regulated electrical equipment distributed under the WPRS.

An EPD spokesman said, "After gazetting the commencement notice of the legislation last November, the department started various preparatory work shortly after, including notifying electrical equipment suppliers, sellers, trade associations and other stakeholders about the details of the enhanced WPRS, and disseminating useful information through trade associations to their members. During January to June this year, the EPD sent staff to visit around 1 600 suppliers and sellers of electrical equipment to distribute relevant documents and publicity materials, and explain to them the details of the enhanced WPRS, assisting them in registering and updating company information with the EPD."

For details of the WPRS, please visit the EPD's website at:
weee.gov.hk/en/.

In addition, according to the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354), save for certain exceptions, any person who is engaged in the storage, treatment, reprocessing or recycling (but not repair) of e-waste must obtain a waste disposal licence issued by the EPD under the law. A permit issued by the EPD is also required for the import and export of e-waste. For information and application forms for waste disposal licenses and waste import and export permits, please visit the websites:
www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/application_for_licences/guidance/facilities_e-waste.html and
www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/wdo_glass.html.