

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr Phil Hogan, T.D. today announced a range of measures and initiatives designed to build on the success of the WEEE system in Ireland and to support the Irish people in attaining the ambitious collection targets required by the new WEEE Directive.

“There has been a magnificent response by the Irish people to the WEEE system in Ireland. It is almost unimaginable to us now, but the sight of discarded waste fridges, washing machines and other e-waste was commonplace throughout our countryside and towns only a few short years ago. The Irish public have demonstrated their commitment to their environment by eradicating this visible blight from our landscape and have proven that with the right awareness raising tools, convenient collection systems and a strong supporting infrastructure, that they will not be found wanting ” the Minister said.

Since the WEEE system was introduced in Ireland in 2005, over 300,000 tonnes of WEEE has been collected which is the equivalent of 187kg per household. In 2013 alone, 35,568 tonnes of WEEE was collected which is the equivalent of 8 million small waste appliances such as electric toothbrushes, kettles, power tools, CD players and battery operated toys. We now annually collect almost 8kg per capita of WEEE which is double the target set by the original WEEE Directive. Whilst significant achievements have been made there are challenging targets ahead to divert even more e-waste from landfill as determined by the new WEEE Directive. A collection target of 45% of electronic equipment placed on the market will apply from 2016, and then 65% of equipment placed on the market or, 85% of electronic waste generated must be collected by 2019.

The Minister said that following an intensive period of consultation he had signed new WEEE Regulations into Irish law which transposes the requirements of the updated Directive and which demonstrates Ireland’s continued ambition and enthusiasm in the approach taken to formulating waste policy. “I believe that these Regulations recognise the important contribution producers of electrical and electronic equipment continue to make to the Irish economy but also re-affirm our commitment to the concept of producer responsibility and the Polluter Pays Principle which underpins much of our waste policy” the Minister said.

New visible environmental costs will be applied from 1 July to a limited range of electrical and electronic equipment and on a significantly reduced level compared with the costs introduced with the original WEEE Regulations in 2005. The application of these costs triggers the introduction of a range of measures to promote and support increased take-back of WEEE which includes an incentivisation scheme for electrical retailers to encourage them to take back as much WEEE as possible from members of the public, direct funding by electrical producers to support local WEEE collection systems at civic amenity facilities and further funding to defray EPA enforcement costs and to support much needed WEEE related research.

Commenting on these measures the Minister said, “the support for the WEEE system being provided by electrical and electronic equipment producers represents a very significant development in the producer responsibility system in Ireland as, for the first time, industry

has formally recognised their role in providing financial support for statutory bodies with responsibility for overseeing and supporting the implementation of polluter pays policy in the State.”

There are considerable gains for consumers under the new arrangements: they will now enjoy significantly more flexible return options, improved access to civic amenity sites and an increase in the number of special collection events organised by the WEEE compliance schemes. Retailers will continue to take back WEEE free of charge and on a one to one basis in store and in addition:

- There is now no time limit on the take back of WEEE in store from the customer from the time of purchase of new appliances.
- Large electrical retailers are now obliged to take back very small appliances free of charge and without any obligation on the consumers to purchase.
- Free WEEE recycling at local authority civic amenity sites and collection events held around the country almost every weekend will assist those without nearby collection points.
- Retailers must provide collection of take back on delivery of new item so long as they have provided 24 hours’ notice of delivery and provided the old product is prepared for collection.

The Minister urged all stakeholders, in particular the two producer compliance schemes ERP Ireland and WEEE Ireland, the National WEEE Register, the retail sector, local authorities and the EPA to continue to work together in a focussed and cohesive manner to support the public who have worked so hard to make this initiative the success that it is; “It has been through the hard work of all these stakeholders but most importantly the enthusiasm of the Irish consumer which has enabled us perform so exceptionally well over the last nine years. I see this as an opportunity to further reduce the adverse impact on the environment from the generation of this particular waste stream and to take Ireland onto a new plain of environmental performance in terms of WEEE collection, treatment and re-use in the years to come.”

For more information on the new Regulations and the WEEE System log onto [www.weee.ie](http://www.weee.ie) or [www.weeeregister.ie](http://www.weeeregister.ie)

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