

Waste battery regulation

In the United Kingdom (UK) batteries and accumulators are regulated to help protect the environment through the Waste Batteries and Accumulators Regulations 2009 (as amended) - the underpinning legislation:

The manufacturer or importer that first places batteries on the UK market - including those in products - is classed as the producer and is therefore responsible for compliance if the business has a UK presence. This provision extends to overseas companies that are or should be registered with Companies House.

The specific obligations in relation to waste batteries depend on their type, but all require registration with the appropriate environmental regulator via the National Packaging Waste Database.

Producers - manufacturers and importers - must record the tonnage and chemistry of the batteries they place on the market and provide this information annually via the National Packaging Waste Database.

The guiding principles of the various arrangements are that all waste batteries are processed by an Approved Battery Treatment Operator (ABTO) or an Approved Battery Exporter (ABE) and that producers pay for their collection, treatment and recycling.

Finally, distributors and retailers that sell or supply more than 32 kg of batteries a year must participate in the take back scheme. This involves providing a free collection point for waste portable batteries at their premises and arranging their transport to an ABTO or ABE, usually through a BCS.

Batteries' development and production are strategic priorities for Europe in the shift towards clean energy. They are also key components in the European automotive industry. The global demand for batteries is increasing rapidly and is predicted to have a 14-fold increase by the year 2030. To minimise the environmental impacts of this growth and considering changes in society, new technological developments, markets and the uses of batteries, the European Commission proposed a new Batteries Regulation in 2020.

The Regulation entered into force on 17 August 2023 and repeals the Batteries Directive (Directive 2006/66/EC). It continues to restrict the use of mercury and cadmium in batteries and introduces a restriction for lead in portable batteries.

Article 6 of the Regulation sets out the framework to restrict hazardous substances in batteries. This ensures that substances used in batteries or present in waste batteries do not pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

By 31 December 2027, the Commission will present a report to the European Parliament and Council identifying the substances in batteries that have a negative impact on human health, the environment or



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recycling processes.

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