

Wisconsin' New E-waste Law – Implications for Local Governments

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Wisconsin's electronics recycling law will go into effect in January of 2010. This law is a "Product Stewardship" approach that requires manufacturers of certain consumer electronics to assume financial responsibility for the collection and recycling of used electronics. In the past waste electronics or e-waste has been collected on a voluntary basis from residents by many municipalities. The new law also shifts the recycling burden from local units of government to retailers and manufactures based upon the weight of consumer electronic devices sold in Wisconsin.

What does this new law do?

- Prohibits the disposal of various electronic devices such as: computers, computer monitors, printers, televisions, VCRs, DVD players, and telephones with video displays.
- Requires manufacturers to collect or contract with others to collect eligible electronic devices (EEDs) from households and K-12 public schools.
- Provides an incentive to collect EEDs from rural counties – For every one pound of eligible electronic devices collected from households in one of the 39 rural counties defined in the bill the manufactures can receive a credit of 1.25 pounds towards their recycling requirement.

Landfill and incineration bans effective Sept. 1, 2010 include:

Consumer computers
Computer peripherals,
Televisions and other video display devices,
Fax machines,
VCRs and DVD players,
Consumer printers,
Phones with video displays (cell phones)

One result of this new law is communities may decide to discontinue collecting these materials for recycling and rely upon manufacturers and recyclers to provide recycling opportunities for residents. The only requirement for local units of government identified in the law is as follows: *Local units of government responsible for recycling must provide information about e-waste collection events or opportunities and the reasons for recycling to their residents.*

Some communities may choose to take a more active role in ensuring residents have access to recycling services for their used electronics. Here are two possible options for enhancing recycling opportunities in your community:

- Partner with collectors and recyclers to provide recycling opportunities – In order to ensure residents have opportunities to recycle e-waste a local unit of government may choose to recruit recyclers to set up collection events or facilities in their community.
- Act as a collector or contract directly with a recycler/collector to provide recycling opportunities for residents.

CED or "Covered Electronic Device" is a consumer video display device, a consumer computer or consumer printer

EED or "Eligible Electronic Device" is an electronic device such as a computers computer monitor, printer, television, VCR,

Collecting used electronics under Wisconsin's new electronics recycling law

Many local units of government have already held collection events for these materials. If your community was pleased with the performance of the previous service provider you may want to contact them to discuss future collection events. An alternative would be to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) that can be used to select a recycler to serve the needs of your community. Contracts resulting from this process will most likely identify a set quantity of electronic waste that will be covered under this program. The contract should also include provisions for any e-waste collected in excess of the agreed to weights.

If a local unit of government decides to become a "Collector" they must register with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). All collectors will be required to register on an annual basis, provide a list of collection locations, report weights of EEDs collected and the names of partner recyclers where the e-waste is shipped for recycling.

Items to consider when contracting for recycling services:

- Ensure your service provider has registered as a collector or recycler with the Wisconsin DNR.
- Don't rely upon verbal agreements, get it in writing.
- Have a system in place to deal with electronic waste from businesses.
- Review the recycler's environmental performance to ensure they are operating in an environmentally sound manner.
- Prepare for a large response if there has not been a "free" collection event in your area.

In order to participate in the program collectors and recyclers must register with the Wisconsin DNR by December 31, 2009 for the first program year that will run from January 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010. In subsequent years the registration deadline will be August 1 of each program year which will begin on July 1st.

As Wisconsin transitions to this new infrastructure for handling electronic waste SHWEC staff will be available to provide guidance and assistance as your community decides what role to play. Technical assistance regarding RFP preparation, sample contracts, and collection site management and operation are available. For more information please contact for this issue are: Recycling Specialist *Joe Van Rossum* (joseph.vanrossum@ces.uwex.edu 608-262-0936) or Solid and Hazardous Waste Specialist *Steve Brachman* (steve.brachman@ces.uwex.edu 414-227-3160)

The Wisconsin DNR also maintains a website (www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/wm/ewaste/) where information is being posted as it becomes available.

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