



Honest Employment Law Practice Ltd

Help! On your terms!

Are you aware of the WEEE regulations?

A recent survey by the environmental guidance partnership Netregs has found that small and medium sized businesses across the UK are still unaware of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations 2006.

One year after new legislation came into force, a survey by Netregs found that small and medium sized businesses across the UK are still unaware of the 2006 Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations - meaning that many SMEs may be missing out on cost savings and neglecting their environmental responsibilities.

The SME-environment survey, commissioned by the environmental guidance website, found that only 12 per cent of SMEs could name the WEEE Regulations unprompted, and just a third (36 per cent) had heard of them once they were named.

SMEs that are still ignoring WEEE legislation could be paying the price through avoidable waste charges and unnecessary effort in disposing of their own electrical waste. The WEEE Regulations were introduced in January 2007 to reduce the amount of electrical waste going to landfill, and is one of the most universally-relevant of all environmental regulations - UK businesses throw away one million tonnes of WEEE every year. For equipment purchased since August 2005, the regulations now put responsibility for waste disposal on the producers.

Richard Martin, NetRegs programme manager, comments:

"SMEs generate 60 per cent of all commercial waste in England and Wales so it's critical that all users of electrical equipment understand what WEEE means for them - and it is worrying that only 1 in 8 SMEs are aware of WEEE legislation unprompted .

The WEEE Regulations require producers of electrical and electronic equipment to join a Producer Compliance Scheme and to take responsibility for the treatment, collection and recycling of any waste electronic equipment

produced by them since August 2005. For business users of WEEE it means that they may return their end of life electrical equipment to the producer and may no longer need to pay to send their electrical waste to landfill.

Richard Martin continues: "The good news for SMEs is that WEEE legislation can help businesses dispose of their electrical waste products sustainably - and in many cases, at no cost. Where previously businesses may have had to pay for a skip, now they can contact the producer of electrical goods they purchased since 2005 to dispose of their WEEE. We strongly recommend that SMEs incorporate WEEE into their procurement procedures, so that when buying a new piece of equipment they check that the producer is legally registered and already conforms to WEEE. At the end of the equipment's life, disposal should be easier and should also improve the SME's green credentials."

Richard Martin concludes: "Many sectors wrongly believe that WEEE is only relevant to businesses in the electrical sector. In fact, if you use a computer, a photocopier, or even have a microwave in your staff kitchen, you need to be aware of what WEEE means for you. Businesses logging on to the website can read about these and all other environmental regulations applying to them - and can also register for regular e-alert updates to help keep on top of the changes. Businesses could save a significant amount of money just by rethinking their waste disposal."



**Honest Employment
Law Practice Ltd**

Help! On your terms!