

Batteries and Accumulators Directive

On September 26, 2006, the batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators directive 2006/66/EC was published in the EU Official Journal. On September 26, 2008, the previous batteries and accumulators directive 91/157/EEC will be repealed and member states are required to transpose the directive into national law.

The new directive aims to prohibit the placing on the market of certain batteries and accumulators containing mercury or cadmium. It also promotes the collection and recycling of batteries and accumulators by setting collection targets for member states.

The new directive introduces several new requirements:

1. All batteries are required to be marked, either on the battery or its packaging depending on size, with the separate collection symbol
2. All batteries or accumulators containing more than 0.0005% Mercury (Hg) and portable batteries or accumulators containing more than 0.002% Cadmium (Cd) are prohibited
(Note: Button cells may contain no more than 2% by weight Mercury)
3. Batteries, accumulators and button cells containing more than 0.0005% Mercury (Hg), 0.002% Cadmium (Cd) and Lead (Pb) 0.004% are required to be marked with their chemical symbols.
(Note: Prohibition does not apply to portable batteries and accumulators used in cordless power tools, emergency and alarm systems, and medical equipment)
4. The packaging of battery packs shall be marked with the collection symbol.
5. Where the battery or battery pack is such that the symbol would be smaller than 0.5cm x 0.5cm then a symbol measuring 1 cm x 1 cm shall be printed on the consumer packaging.
6. Instructions for the safe removal of batteries should be incorporated into the instructions.

Member states are also required to ensure that end users are fully informed of:

- a) The potential effects on the environment and human health of the substance in the batteries and accumulators;
- b) The desirability of not disposing of waste batteries and accumulators as unsorted municipal waste and participating in their separate collection so as to facilitate treatment and recycling;
- c) The collection and recycling schemes available;
- d) Their role in contributing to the recycling of waste batteries and accumulators;
- e) The meaning of the symbol and the chemical symbols Hg, Cd and Pb.

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