

CANADA-WIDE PRINCIPLES FOR ELECTRONICS PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

Preamble

The management of used electrical and electronics equipment (e-waste) is rapidly becoming a major public policy issue in Canada and elsewhere around the world. Environmental concerns relate to the potentially hazardous nature of some of the materials these products contain and the increasingly large quantity of these products that require disposal in waste management systems. E-waste may contain lead, cadmium, mercury, and other potentially hazardous materials.

In accordance with CCME principles for pollution prevention, producers of electrical and electronic products are responsible for their products at end-of life. It is widely recognized that legislative/regulatory initiatives are required to establish a level playing field for industry in the management of e-waste. The objective of these Canada-wide principles is to assist and support jurisdictions in the development of e-waste programs. While recognizing differences in the legislative/regulatory framework and existing programs among jurisdictions, CCME encourages regional or national cooperation in the development of e-waste programs. Specific measures undertaken by each jurisdiction will be at their discretion, with the goal of effective, efficient, and harmonized implementation.

To promote harmonization of approaches to the greatest extent possible, and to prevent market distortions among jurisdictions, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) endorses the following Canada-wide principles for electronics product stewardship:

Principles

1. Responsibilities associated with management of e-waste are primarily borne by producers of the products, where “producer(s)” means the manufacturer, brand-owner or first importer of the product who sells or offers for sale the product in each jurisdiction.
2. Costs of program management are not borne by general taxpayers.
3. Environmental and human health impacts are minimized throughout the product life-cycle, from design to end-of-life management.
4. Management of e-waste is environmentally sound and consistent with the **4R** waste management hierarchy:
 - a. **Reduce**, including reduction in toxicity and redesign of products for improved reusability or recyclability
 - b. **Reuse**
 - c. **Recycle**
 - d. **Recovery**, of materials and/or energy from the mixed e-waste stream
5. Consumers have reasonable access to collection systems without charge.

6. Education and awareness programs ensure that consumers, retailers and other stakeholders have sufficient information on program design and knowledge of their roles.
7. Program design and implementation will strive for equity and consistency for consumers, particularly between those who live in adjacent jurisdictions and between those who live in small, rural and remote communities and large urban centres
8. Adjacent jurisdictions will strive for consistency in e-waste products collected.
9. Programs will include residential, commercial, historic and orphan products.
10. Programs will report on performance, specify objectives and targets, and be transparent in financial management.
11. E-waste is managed in the most economically and logistically feasible manner, while striving to maximize local economic and social benefits.
12. E-waste is exported from Canada for recycling only at facilities with a documented commitment to environmentally sound management and fair labour practices.