

Management of end-of-life smoke detectors

June 2020

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance has been developed by SEPA to provide clarity on the management of end-of-life smoke detectors in Scotland under The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR) and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013 (WEEE).

This guidance only applies to ionisation chamber smoke detectors, which contain a small radioactive sealed source. They will be referred to as 'smoke detectors' throughout the rest of this guidance.

This guidance only considers the environmental aspects of end-of life-smoke detectors in Scotland.

For the rules on the management of smoke detectors, please refer to the General Binding Rules (GBRs) in Schedule 9 of The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018. If you cannot comply with the GBRs you will need a different type of authorisation from SEPA.

End-of-life options

WEEE regulations apply to all electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market in the UK covered by the scope of the regulations. These regulations were introduced to increase responsible re-use and recycling, and reduce the amount of WEEE going to landfill. End-of-life smoke detectors fall into this scope and are classed as WEEE. Disposal of the smoke detector in normal refuse is prohibited by the WEEE regulations. The radioactive sealed source must be removed from the smoke detector before treatment of the WEEE can begin. To remove the radioactive sealed source from the smoke detector you must be authorised under EASR.

Options to manage end of life smoke detectors include:

- transfer to a facility authorised to remove the radioactive sealed source before treatment of the WEEE can begin;
- return to producer (eg manufacturer, brand owner) or via a supplier;
- remove the radioactive sealed source from the smoke detector if you are appropriately authorised under EASR;
- transfer to a person authorised to receive smoke detectors.

You must check that any facility is appropriately authorised under EASR to manage the smoke detectors. If the smoke detectors are being collected, you must make sure the person collecting them is authorised to carry waste

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/waste/waste-carriers-and-brokers/>

SEPA has produced general WEEE disposal guidance that provides more detail on disposal options for business WEEE. It outlines your options depending on when the smoke detector was purchased, whether you are replacing the smoke detector, whether you wish the producer to finance the disposal or whether you want to finance the disposal yourself.

Please refer to <https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/36478/weee-disposal-guidance-for-business.pdf> for more detailed information.

What EASR authorisation do I need to remove the radioactive sealed source?

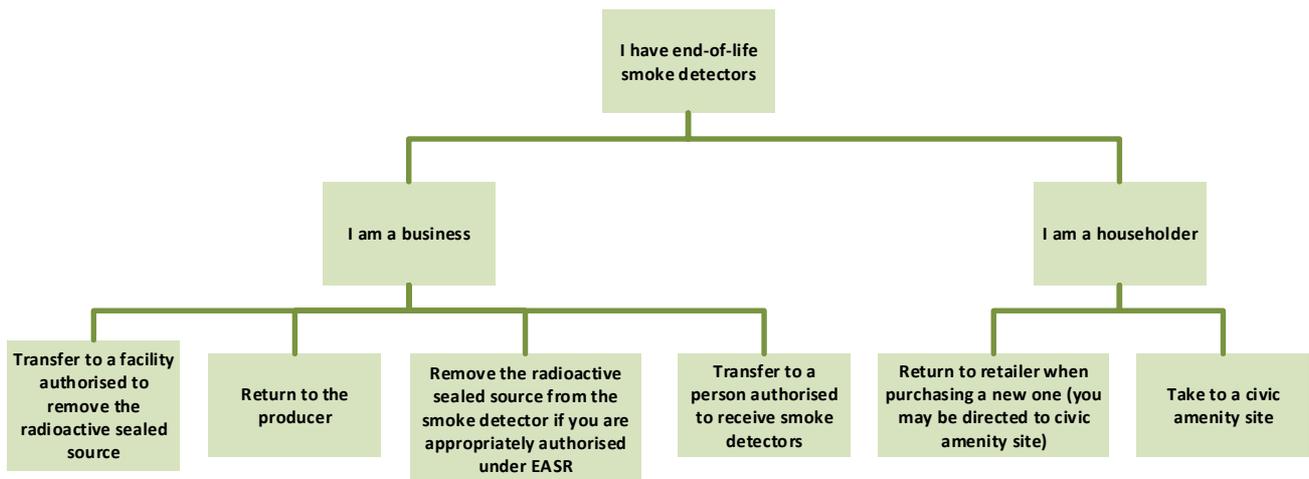
In Scotland, to remove the radioactive sealed source from the end-of-life smoke detector you must be authorised under EASR. If you can comply with the rules this could be under the general binding rules for the management of a smoke detector. Once the sealed source has been removed it can be managed under the general binding rules for the management of a category 5 sealed source. If you cannot comply with the appropriate general binding rules you will need to apply and be granted a permit by SEPA to manage the resultant radioactive waste. For information on how to apply to SEPA for an authorisation please visit: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/>

Information for householders

EASR and WEEE do not apply to householders managing their own domestic waste, however, SEPA promotes the environmentally sound management of WEEE devices and therefore advises the following disposal options for householders for end of life smoke detectors:

- you can take your smoke detectors to a civic amenity site and they should accept it to be recycled under small mixed WEEE;
- you can take your smoke detectors to the retailer/distributor where you are purchasing a new one. This should be free of charge on a one-for-one basis however a retailer who funds local authority WEEE collection sites, may direct you there.

Summary



Other legislation applicable to smoke detectors

Smoke detectors are also covered by other legislation and enforced by other agencies including **occupational safety**, **transport** and **environmental** legislation applicable elsewhere in the UK. You must ensure you comply with **all** legislation applicable to smoke detectors.

For information on accessing this document in an alternative format or language please either contact SEPA by telephone on 03000 99 66 99 or by email to equalities@sepa.org.uk. If you are a user of British Sign Language (BSL) the Contact Scotland BSL service gives you access to an online interpreter enabling you to communicate with us using sign language.

<http://contactscotland-bsl.org>

www.sepa.org.uk

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