

INFORMATION SHEET – PN3-04/May 2008

Batteries Directive 2006/66/EC: Summary for PN3

The following is a summary of Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and waste batteries, specifically how it will affect power tools and associated equipment.

1. What it will do

- a) Continue the ban on batteries containing more than 0.0005% mercury, which was introduced by Directive 91/157/EEC.*
- b) Ban many batteries containing more than 0.002% cadmium from sale in Europe.
- c) Initiate systems for collecting and recycling waste batteries.

2. What it won't do

- a) It won't ban button cells with a mercury content of up to 2% by weight.
- b) It won't ban cadmium from the batteries of cordless power tools (this exemption will be reviewed in 2010, with a view to reversing it).
- c) It won't ban cadmium from "industrial" batteries, i.e. batteries intended exclusively for industrial or professional use, or any batteries which are not sealed.

3. When it will apply

- a) From 26th. September 2008.

4. Implications for product design (for products intended to be sold in Europe)

- a) By 26th. September 2008, all batteries must be marked with the crossed wheellie bin symbol (even if the product that they are used in is also marked with that symbol). The symbol shall cover at least 3% of the area of the largest side of the battery / battery pack (or at least 1.5% of the surface area of a cylindrical battery) up to a maximum size of 5 cm x 5 cm. If the size of the battery is such that the symbol would be smaller than 0.5 cm x 0.5 cm, the packaging shall be marked instead, with a symbol measuring at least 1 cm x 1 cm.
- b) By 26th. September 2008, all batteries containing more than 0.0005% mercury, more than 0.002% cadmium or more than 0.004% lead must be marked Hg, Cd or Pb, respectively. The chemical symbol shall be printed beneath the crossed wheellie bin symbol and be at least one-quarter of the size of that symbol.
- c) By 26th. September 2008, all products containing batteries shall be accompanied by instructions showing how to remove them safely and stating the type of batteries used.

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d) It is unclear whether sealed batteries contained in products other than cordless power tools will be classified as "industrial" batteries or as "portable" batteries. If they are classified as industrial batteries, we will be allowed to continue to use cadmium; if they are classified as portable batteries, any cadmium must be replaced before 26th. September 2008. (Any unsealed batteries are classified as industrial and can continue to contain cadmium).

e) By 26th. September 2009 all portable batteries must be marked with their capacity. This requirement will apply to battery-powered tools. Neither detailed rules for how this will be done, nor standardized methods for determining capacity, are available; a deadline for their publication has been set at 26th. March 2009.

*Since the limitations on mercury content were already imposed by Directive 91/157/EEC, it is assumed that existing batteries already comply with them.

5. Implications for Sales

European sales companies will probably have to register as "producers" in their own countries. A producer is anyone who places batteries on the market for the first time but the definition may be subject to a minimum quantity being sold. This minimum quantity, if any, will be determined when each country enacts the directive into law and might exempt some sales companies from the need to register. The date for registration will be determined by each country, but should be by 26th. September 2008.

European sales companies will have to take back used batteries and battery packs for recycling; batteries contained in end-of-life products will be taken back and treated as WEEE.