

Law for the Recycling of Specified Kinds of Home Appliances (Home Appliance Recycling Law)

Almost half of the post-consumer use home appliances discharged by households have been discarded at landfill sites without any treatment, although there have been many cases in which metals including iron have been recovered after the shredding process. Since post-consumer use home appliances contain useful resources such as iron, aluminum or glasses and the remaining capacity of final landfill sites has become smaller, reduction of waste has become an urgent issue, and reduction and recycling of wastes have been all the more needed.

With this situation, the Home Appliance Recycling Law was enacted in June 1998 and was enforced in April 2001, aiming to realize sound waste treatment and efficient use of resources through reduction of wastes and full utilization of recyclable resources in order to realize a sound material-cycle society. The law introduces a new framework of recycling of which the principle is to place an obligation on manufactures and retailers of home appliances.

With regard to the four specified post-consumer use home appliances, namely air conditioners, television sets, refrigerators and washing machines, this law stipulates the rolls of each player; the collection from consumers by retailers, recycling by manufacturers or importers as well as payment of fees for collection, transportation and recycling by consumers when they discard those appliances. Under the law, manufacturers or importers are required to meet the target of recycle rate (50-60%) in recycling post-consumer use home appliances, in addition to recovering CFCs from air conditioners and refrigerators. The role of the government is stipulated to provide necessary information on recycling or imposing recommendation, order and penalty on the business entities that make improper claims.

In order to ensure that the post-consumer use specified kinds of home appliances are delivered from consumers to manufacturers via retail stores, a manifest system is established. This is a system in which consumers can check up that the waste they discharged has been correctly transported and disposed of.

Recycling Flow of Home Appliances

Discharge

Person discharging

Payment of fees for collection and recycling
 (Recycling fee: air-conditioner ¥3,500, television ¥2,700,
 refrigerator ¥4,600, washing machine ¥2,400)

Collection and Transportation

Obligation to collect

1. Specified kinds of appliances sold by the retailer
2. Specified kinds of appliances collected when new appliances are purchased

Retailer

Obligation to transfer

Municipality

Securing reliable transportation by manifest system

Designated collection site

380 Designated collection sites
 41 Recycling plants
 (As of Oct. 2004)

Obligation to collect

1. Absence of a party responsible for collection and recycling due to bankruptcy of manufacturer, etc. Specified appliances formerly manufactured or imported by the manufacturer or importer
2. Consignment by medium and small businesses

Designated corporation

Manufacturer
 Importer

Municipality

Monitoring of implementation

Obligation of recycling

Recycling

Recycling standards: air-conditioners 60%, television sets 55%,
 (As of 1998) refrigerators 50%, washing machines 50%