

Electronics Retailers Recycling Report Card 2013

Criteria for grading



TAKE IT BACK. MAKE IT GREEN. RECYCLE RESPONSIBLY.

The Electronics TakeBack Coalition used the following criteria for its report card on U.S. electronics retailers' efforts to takeback and recycle used electronics from consumers.

Grading Criteria	Why this is important	Max Points
1. RECYCLING PROGRAM		
1.1. Does the retailer have an ongoing year-round takeback program? (as opposed to occasional events)	Consumers are more likely to recycle when they have a permanent system they can use.	1
1.2. Do they take back all the same product categories that they sell?	Some companies only take back the items with the most value, leaving it to others to collect the large items with low value. We think retailers should provide convenient collection for all items they are selling.	3
1.3. Do they offer physical collection sites (in stores or other locations) where they collect all of the large items (categories other than phones and tablets) that they sell?	Consumers are more likely to recycle when they have permanent collection sites they know are always available. Most people won't use mail back for recycling. Some will mail small products especially if they get trade in value for them. But for larger items, like TVs, printers, desktops, they need ongoing, convenient physical collection sites.	5
1.4. Do they have collection sites in every state they sell into?		5
1.5. Is recycling free at the time of drop off?	Consumers are less likely to recycle if they must pay for it at recycling time.	3
Total points this section		17
TRANSPARENCY on volumes		
2. TRANSPARENCY. Do they publicly report on their takeback program every year, on their website, including:	Companies that are proud of their programs should be transparent about what they are doing. There should be enough detail reported that it's easy to see how much effort is being made to recycle and reuse old products.	
2.1. Total volume of equipment collected?		1
2.2. How much equipment was refurbished and reused?		1
2.3. How much equipment was recycled?		1
2.4. How much ink and toner was recycled (if they sell printers)		1
2.5. Total volume collected as a percentage of the total volume the retailer sold.	Since retailers vary in size, comparing amount collected to how much they are selling helps to "equalize" these statistics.	5
2.6. Breakdown of specific materials ultimately recovered during recycling, including critical minerals, if any	Retailers should measure whether they are using vendors who will maximize recovery of materials.	1
Total points this section		10 pts
3. HOW MUCH IS COMING BACK?		
3.1. How much total electronic equipment did they take back in 2012 in the U.S. for recycling and reuse?	The section above gave credit for disclosing this information. Here we evaluate how large the volumes were.	5
3.2. How much equipment was refurbished and reused?		4

Grading Criteria	Why this is important	Max Points
3.3. How much equipment was recycled?		4
3.4. How much toner and ink recycled (if they sell toner/ink)?		4
	Total points this section	17 pts
RESPONSIBLE RECYCLING		
4. Responsible Recycling We want to be sure that reuse and recycling is done responsibly, and that toxic e-waste isn't sent to developing countries where it can cause harm.	How much a retailer is collecting for recycling is only part of the story. What are they doing with what they collect? How are they making sure it's handled in the most responsible way possible?	
4.1. Public Export Policy. Does company have a formal public policy (on website) for their recycling and trade-in programs that says that:		
4.1.1. All products or parts must be tested and found to be fully functional before being exported from the U.S. to developing countries	Sadly, it's a common practice for U.S. "recyclers" to simply load up old products into a shipping container and export them to developing countries. Any retailer with a takeback program should have a clear and detailed policy against this.	3
4.1.2. All hazardous materials ⁱ and components generated by downstream refurbishers and recyclers must be kept in developed countries throughout final disposition	Downstream accountability for bad mercury lamps, batteries, CRTs, circuit boards, etc. and shredded/processed e-waste (such as circuit boards) is essential throughout the entire recycling/refurbishment chain, to keep these materials in developed countries only.	
4.2. Transparency. Does company publicly disclose all their recycling and reuse vendors for their recycling and trade in programs?	Responsible recycling is all about the vendors. Who is handling the retailer's e-waste? They should name their vendors.	3
4.3. E-Steward Certification. 4.3.1. Are all of the company's recycling and reuse vendors handling electronics returned in the U.S. certified to the highest voluntary standard in the industry, the <i>e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment</i> [®]	The only way we can evaluate what the retailer's vendors are doing with their e-waste (since retailers' audits are not public) is by looking at the recycling/reuse standards they are certified to. Are they ONLY using recyclers who are certified to the highest standards in the industry? Only the e-Stewards standard forbids exports of untested/non-working used electronics to developing countries. Using R2 vendors earns no points here.	Max 10
4.3.2. Future certification. If the answer to 4.3.1 above is "no," has the company signed a pledge that by a future date, all of their takeback and trade-in programs in the U.S. will work <u>only</u> with reuse and recycling vendors who are certified e-Stewards? All electronics returned in the U.S. will go only to certified e-Stewards for reuse, repair, or recycling.	We want to encourage retailers to move towards using only e-Steward certified vendors. We will therefore give some credit to companies who publicly pledge that they will use only certified e-Stewards by a date in the near future, as a good faith step towards more responsible recycling. In some cases, vendors are in the process of obtaining this certification. Retailers with these vendors should make this pledge.	
	Total points this section	16
	TOTAL Possible points	60

ⁱ Hazardous materials as defined under the Basel Convention, not the very narrow definition that the US EPA uses.