

From WEEE to REEE:



Pictured at the official launch of Rehab Recycle's new state-of-the-art facility dedicated to electrical reuse in Tallaght – the first of its kind in Ireland, are (left to right) above Pauline Brady, General Operator; Angela Kerins, Chief Executive, Rehab Group and Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

How Rehab Recycle is reusing and recycling electrical goods

On Monday, 21 November, Rehab's new facility for processing re-usable Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) was opened in Tallaght by Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government Phil Hogan TD

THE TALLAGHT FACILITY is poised to become a re-use centre of excellence for electronic and electrical goods, while its sister facility in Dublin's Ballymount will be totally dedicated to the recycling of WEEE. This facility was officially opened by Mayor of South Dublin County Council Cairiona Jones earlier in November.

WEEE, or Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, is defined as anything that has a plug or a battery and has come to the end of its useful life. In everyday terms, this means that WEEE is everything from a washing machine or a microwave oven to a remote control, an electric toothbrush or even a bicycle lamp!

Rehab Recycle has been involved in recycling WEEE since 2005. Prior to this, a large amount of electrical waste generated in Ireland ended up in landfill

sites, but this has improved greatly – in 2010 Irish people recycled 9 kilograms of waste electrical goods per person; that's 3.5 kilograms above the European average. This equates to every person in Ireland recycling approximately 1.4 pieces of electrical equipment every year. It's quite a good score – in fact, Ireland is leading the way in the recycling of electrical equipment – but Rehab Recycle thinks we can all do even better.

Martin Reddy, General Manager of Rehab Recycle, explains. "Up until 2005, there was no obligation to recycle electrical equipment. A European law, the WEEE Directive, came into force in Ireland, and Rehab Recycle became one of the first companies dealing with waste electronic goods.

"Our primary focus to date has been on

recycling equipment; however, there is now a fantastic opportunity to actually reuse equipment. The amount of WEEE recycled annually in Ireland amounts to about 6.4 million kettles, irons, games consoles, clocks and TVs, etc – if we reused just 5 per cent, that would mean a staggering 320,000 electrical items back on the market for sale.

"So you see, WEEE becomes REEE – because instead of calling it 'waste', we recognise its potential for reuse. It is an asset. In Ballymount, we will deal with items that have come to the end of their lives and break them down into various components for recycling; in Tallaght, we will be assessing items, looking at items that can be reused, ensuring everything is in working order, and that they are fit for reuse – extending their lives and sending them off to good homes."

Minister Hogan complimented Rehab on the new facility, "I commend Rehab for its dynamism and determination in bringing forward this development and for its efforts to increase significantly the



Above: Washing machines being baled and crushed at the new WEEE facility in Ballymount, South County Dublin.



Pictured above: At the recent official opening of the new state-of-the-art Rehab Recycle WEEE facility in Ballymount, are Thomas Millar, Operations Manager, Rehab Recycle; Leo Donovan, CEO, WEEE Ireland; Cllr Caitríona Jones, Mayor of South Dublin; Martin Reddy, General Manager, Rehab Recycle; and Anthony Benney, Rehab Enterprises.

Rehab Recycle also launched its Promise it to Rehab Recycle scheme, encouraging companies to pass on all of their out-of-date and unused computer and other electrical equipment for the benefit of schools, charities, community groups and start-up enterprises. Over the last number of years Rehab Recycle has passed on over 4,000 computers to good homes and hopes to expand this number under the new scheme.

In Scotland, Rehab Group company Haven started working in the area of electronic recycling in 2010 and this has gone so well that Haven is moving to larger premises in Glasgow in December. It concentrates on asset reuse and works with a range of Scottish companies, offering a service to the business community as well as directly to consumers. Haven can help anyone looking to dispose of anything from one PC to a whole office clearout. Haven hopes to continue to expand the business, delivering a quality service in Scotland and providing sustainable employment for people with disabilities and people who are disadvantaged.

All these developments will help ensure that Rehab Recycle and Haven will maintain their position as major players, not only in the recycling of waste electrical material but in the reuse of electronic and electrical goods – making REEE out of WEEE. ■

levels of reuse in Ireland". Thomas Millar, Operations Manager, said, "here in Tallaght, we offer a complete solution to companies looking for a way to dispose of their unwanted or out-of-date IT equipment.

"We use a certified data-wiping system that guarantees that all the data is removed and cannot be recovered. We are also a Microsoft Approved Refurbisher and strive to rebuild equipment to the highest standards. Working with us not only assures customers that their IT equipment and sensitive information will be dealt with securely and in compliance with regulations, it also provides sustainable jobs for people with disabilities. In Tallaght, we currently employ 32 people. We hope to increase that as we see more companies embracing the concept of REEE," said Millar.

RECYCLING TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS

CARDBOARD

- Make sure all your cardboard and paper is clean and dry.
- Flatten all used cardboard boxes, remove anything that can't be recycled such as plastic windows.
- You can reuse some of your cardboard from Christmas presents in the garden. Layer cardboard in your garden to act as weed-controlling mulch.
- Cardboard also works well in compost. Use it to line the compost heap or layer it with wet grass cuttings.
- Shred your old wrapping paper and use it as animal bedding.

WEEE

- Remember WEEE stands for Waste Electrical or Electronic Equipment, so anything with a plug or a battery! It is important that WEEE is disposed of properly.
- Plan ahead! Contact your local authority and ask about WEEE drop-off points or collection dates over the Christmas holidays. Always ensure that the person you are giving your WEEE or batteries to is authorised to handle them.
- If you are purchasing a replacement product, then ask your retailer about taking back the existing product.
- Christmas generates countless purchases of batteries – and usually all last minute! Always check that you are buying the correct batteries. Many shops now have battery collection boxes and will return old batteries on your behalf.
- Looking for an environmentally-conscious new year's resolution? Why not arrange a WEEE day at your office – this gives everyone the opportunity to ensure that all electrical waste generated over the Christmas period is disposed of and is collected in a compliant manner.

GLASS

- Try to store your glass bottles upside-down before bringing them to your local bottle bank. This way you will avoid any spillages in the boot of your car.
- Remember – cups, saucers and plates are not made of glass and should be placed in your general waste bin.
- Green and blue glass go together into the green bottle bank.
- Empty bags and boxes should be taken home.



REPAK RECYCLING WEEK 2011

Rehab Glassco used Repak Recycling Week (3–9 October) to remind everyone that every bottle counts when it comes to glass recycling. Recycling just one glass bottle gives enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes, a 100 watt light bulb for an hour, or a television for 1.5 hours.

- Over 143 million bottles and jars were collected in 2010 by Rehab Glassco, Ireland's largest glass collection and recycling company.
- The average number of bottles

recycled per head of population was 51.

- The people of Galway City were the top recyclers with deposits of 97 bottles or jars for every man, woman and child in the city.
- The people of Waterford and Wicklow were the next best recyclers with an average each of 74 items of glass recycled per person.
- The title of Ireland's busiest Rehab Glassco bring site was won by Tesco Celbridge, Co. Kildare with 443 tonnes of glass deposited, representing 1,417,600 bottles and jars.

