



e-Scrap

Shocking Facts. Smart Ideas. Brighter Future.

www.eScrapIndiana.org

| 888 • e-Scrap • |

Federal Electronics Challenge:

Electronic Stewardship One Byte @ A Time

The Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC) is a voluntary education and recognition partnership program, open to all federal agencies and facilities, that assists federal agencies to purchase greener products, reduce impacts of electronics products during use, and manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally friendly way. It is a flexible commitment as each facility determines its own level of commitment, its own goal(s), and the life cycle phase(s) on which to focus.

The Challenge is sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive with assistance by the General Services Administration, the Department of Defense, and the Federal Network for Sustainability.

Partners will learn the importance of applying environmentally sound electronics management principles throughout a product's life cycle stages—from the acquisition and procurement of environmentally preferable products to the operations and maintenance phase to, end-of-life management of those products.

Why Worry About Electronics?

Used and obsolete electronics, such as computers, printers, mobile phones, and fax machines, are part of an increasing and complex waste stream that poses challenging environmental management problems for federal facilities. Electronic products contain a variety of hazardous constituents. Cathode ray tubes, circuit boards, batteries, and other electronic components often contain toxic materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. This growing and changing waste stream presents new challenges and responsibilities in designing and managing products to reduce the environmental impacts associated with each phase of the electronics life cycle—acquisition and procurement, operation and maintenance, and end-of-life management.

Why Should the Federal Government Get Involved?

The federal government, which purchases more than \$38 billion worth of electronic equipment and services annually, has the opportunity to provide leadership in the environmentally sound and cost effective management of electronic assets. FEC will help federal facilities and agencies become leaders and face the new challenges posed by this waste stream.

Benefits in Joining the Challenge?

Partners receive a variety of benefits as they participate in the Challenge, including:

- Educational training and feedback.

- Networking opportunities.
- Cost-effective tools for managing electronic assets.
- Cost savings through resource efficiency, energy savings, and new equipment maintenance practices.
- Strategies to ensure data security.
- National recognition from the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive.

Federal Electronics Challenge Goals

The vision behind the Federal Electronics Challenge is for the Federal government to lead by example. The goals of the FEC are to achieve cost-effective, environmentally responsible electronics management. This goal will be achieved in part by:

- Promoting ENERGY STAR® features
- Extend product life in facility
- Increasing recovery rate and expand the recycling infrastructure
- Utilizing the concept of supply and demand to promote environmentally preferable electronic equipment
- Reducing the volume and toxicity of electronic equipment waste

What roles can stakeholders play in the Federal Electronics Challenge?

The Federal Electronics Challenge is being rolled out as a national program in Fall 2004. Throughout the process, we are asking nonprofits, industry and academic stakeholders involved in purchasing and recycling of electronic assets to assist us in developing necessary tools and information for our federal partners. Potential stakeholder actions include:

- Providing information on environmentally preferable products to federal government purchasers.
- Identifying best management practices for the use and end-of-life management of electronic products.
- Providing information on organizations that provide end-of-life services to the Federal government.

The Federal Electronics Challenge Steering Committee is developing the tools you need to change acquisition and procurement, operation and maintenance, and end-of-life management practices. Here are some examples of the tools developed for the Federal Electronics Challenge Partners.

Acquisition and Planning Phase

- **FEC Guidelines for Procurement of Environmentally Preferable Products** - This document provides general guidance on the acquisition of environmentally preferable products and services. It explains how to increase purchasing of electronic products that minimize harmful effects on human health and the environment and meet the environmental goals associated with the Federal Electronics Challenge.
- **Product Environmental Information Sheet** - This document should be sent by a federal facility to a manufacturer. The manufacturer should fill out the document with information about the specific product a federal facility is considering purchasing. The product information sheet includes a disclaimer that explains the intent of the

document to the manufacturer. If a manufacturer refuses to fill this out or has specific problems please have them contact the Federal Electronics Challenge.

- **Using Environmental Attributes to Determine Best Value** - When evaluating products or services, purchasing staff usually consider factors such as technical approach, key personnel, technical capability, corporate experience, past performance, and price. They should also consider environmental factors. This document identifies environmental attributes and elements that can serve as evaluation criteria during best value procurement analyses.
- **Ecolabels** - Ecolabels define a product as adhering to predetermined criteria. This fact sheet identifies three broad types of ecolabels currently available and provides information and links to key international ecolabels and environmental standards that relate to electronics products.

Operations and Maintenance Phase

- **Energy Conservation with ENERGY STAR®** - This document provides guidance on implementing ENERGY STAR® and energy conservation programs at your facility. It also includes detailed instructions for using EZ Wizard and EZ Save programs, which are free from the ENERGY STAR® Web site. This document applies to information technology staff, equipment/software managers, and environmental program managers.
- **Information Technology Asset Management** - Information technology (IT) asset management can help your agency reduce the life-cycle costs of its electronic equipment. Most asset management software is incomplete. This document can help agencies identify gaps in the software. It can also help agencies that do not have software to develop an asset management system. Good IT asset management guides planning, purchasing, and disposition.

End-of-Life Management Phase

- **Instructions to Recipients of Donated Electronics** - The "Computers for Learning" executive order requires the federal government to donate a lot of used electronic equipment to schools and other entities. This fact sheet should be given to the recipient of the donated equipment along with the equipment. It outlines, in broad terms, what the recipient should do with the equipment at the end of its useful life.
- **Checklist for Selection of Electronics Reuse and Recycling Services** - This checklist was designed to guide federal generators of electronic waste in the selection of a recycler. It can help procurers of electronics recycling services make informed decisions. The document can also help providers of electronics recycling services to better understand the different issues facing the electronics recycling industry.
- **Electronics Recycling Facility Audit Checklist** - This audit tool will allow you to determine if the recycling vendor you have selected to collect your electronics is reputable and in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations. It will help you to ask appropriate questions.
- **Packaging Instructions for Electronics Recycling** - This document provides step-by-step guidance on packaging equipment prior to transfer for recycling. It includes instructions for electronic peripherals, CPUs, and computer monitors, and

lists specific packaging materials that can be used to prevent breakage and contamination. This document targets facilities and/or equipment managers.

- **Teleconferences** - Each month, the Federal Electronics Challenge hosts free, informative interactive teleconferences for partners. The topics of these presentations cover the many environmental challenges faced by today's federal facilities. Recent teleconferences have focused on:
 - End-of-Life Management
 - Goal Setting as a Federal Electronics Challenge partner
 - Donating Electronics
 - Green Purchasing
 - Toxics and Electronics
 - Data Security
 - Liability
 - Choosing Your Recycler
 - Auditing Your Recycler

Federal Electronics Challenge Website:

<www.federalelectronicchallenge.net>

The Federal Electronics Challenge website is a comprehensive tool that federal facilities can use to learn how to improve the purchasing, use and end-of-life environmental aspects and save resources. The website contains information on why electronics are a major issue for federal facilities, tools and resources to purchase greener electronics products and manage their electronic assets in an environmentally sound manner.

Contact Information

Holly Elwood (US EPA HQ) - 202/564-8854 – elwood.holly@epa.gov

Chris Newman (US EPA, Region 5) – 312/353-8402, newman.christopherm@epa.gov