

# Press Release No. 86/2009

**Press Relations Officer:** Martin Ittershagen  
**PR-staff:** Anke Döpke, Dieter Leutert,  
Fotini Mavromati, Theresa Pfeifer, Martin Stallmann  
**Address:** Postfach 1406, 06813 Dessau-Roßlau  
**Telephone:** +49 340/21 03-2122, -2827, -2250, -2318, -3927, -2507  
**E-Mail:** [pressestelle@uba.de](mailto:pressestelle@uba.de)  
**Internet:** [www.umweltbundesamt.de](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de)



## Great expectations as Battery Act register goes online

### New battery legislation boosts producer product responsibility

**Batteries and accumulators are part of our everyday lives, their absence in MP3 players, laptops and mobile phones, torches, hearing aids or cars unimaginable. On 1 December 2009 the Act Concerning the Placing on the Market, Collection and Environmentally Compatible Waste Management of Batteries and Accumulators (*Batteriegesetz - BattG*) will enter into force and replace the Batteries Ordinance. It will also mark the launch of a register for producers and importers of batteries and accumulators.**

One of the new tasks accorded to the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) is to keep a central electronic register for battery producers and to prosecute administrative breaches of law. The register associated with *BattG* which the legislator has foreseen is accessible via the UBA web site as of 1 December. The purpose of the register is to ensure producer and importer awareness and responsibility for the waste management associated with their products. Producers, as defined by the new legislation, are to register their presence on the market by 28 February 2010. Entry in the register is free of charge. Consumers will also be able to check whether the batteries they use have been registered by the producer.

The 'Battery Act' implements the European Battery Directive and replaces the Battery Ordinance valid up until now. The main changes to the Battery Act are:

- Sales ban on portable batteries with cadmium content,
- Establishment of a central register,
- Producers' take-back systems are subject to authorisation by a public authority,
- Binding collection targets for portable batteries,
- Labelling and documentation obligations.

In addition to the existing ban on batteries with mercury content (over .005 % content by weight; button cells with 2% content by weight), cadmium batteries will also be banned, which means that batteries with more than .002 percent cadmium content by weight may not be marketed. Portable batteries intended for use in emergency and alarm systems, medical equipment or cordless electrical tools are exempted from the ban.

The extension of the mercury ban with a ban on cadmium means less pollution while boosting consumer and health protection.

Roughly 380,000 tonnes of batteries from equipment, industry and automobiles were sold in 2008. Merchants continue to be obliged to take back spent batteries at the sales point free of charge. What is new is binding collection targets for portable batteries. The foundation guaranteeing the uniform and nation-wide collection of spent batteries in Germany, *Das Gemeinsame Rücknahmesystem*, as well as the producer take-back systems must attain a collection rate of 35 percent, and even 45 percent by 2016. In 2008 Germany's three largest take-back systems achieved a 41% collection rate, which reflects a stagnation at the 2007 level. Continued efforts are necessary to raise the collection rate by 2016, for in addition to heavy metals, nickel, zinc and lithium and their compounds may also not be discarded in household waste. This is due firstly to the risk they may pose to the environment and secondly, they are valuable resources which are only available in finite quantities. Consumers may continue returning spent batteries to their sales points. Bins for free take-back of spent batteries and accumulators are placed in all locations where batteries are for sale. Disposal of spent batteries with household waste is prohibited.

For more information on the Battery Act and the associated register go to:  
<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/abfallwirtschaft/battg/index.htm>

Dessau-Roßlau, 30 November 2009