UNIFE WEEE factsheet

October 2026

About UNIFE

UNIFE, the *European Rail Supply Industry Association*, has operated in Brussels since 1992, representing European train builders and rail equipment suppliers. The association advocates for more than 120 of Europe's leading rail supply companies – from SMEs to major industrial champions – active in designing, manufacturing, maintaining and refurbishing rail transport systems (trains, metros, trams, freight wagons), subsystems and related equipment. UNIFE also brings together national rail industry associations from 13 European countries.

The Chemical Risks Topical Group (CR TG) leads UNIFE's policy on the management of chemicals and hazardous substances at the global and European levels, including the *European Chemicals Agency* (ECHA) activities, but not limited to them. It focuses on batteries, F-Gases (fluorinated gases), OHS (occupational health and safety), PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals), RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances), SCIP (substances of concern in products), and WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment). It updates the Rail Industry Substance List (RISL), the UNIFE Material and Substance Declaration Template and Product-Related Chemicals Regulations.

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About the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

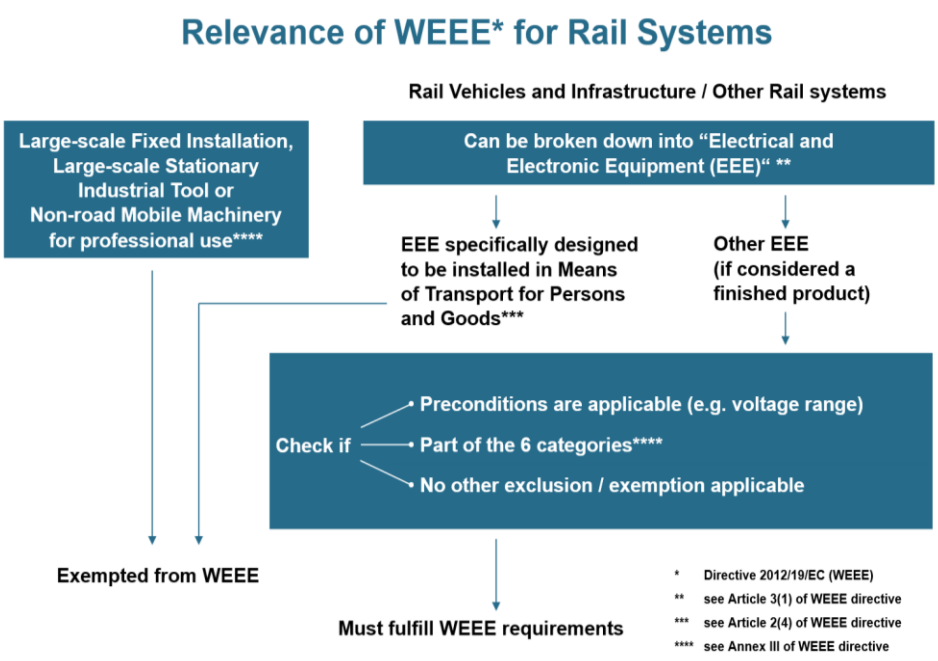
This UNIFE fact sheet sets out the extent to which products from the rail supply industry come within the scope of ***Directive 2012/19/EU*** *of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on* ***waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)***.

This Directive aims to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of generating and managing waste from electrical and electronic equipment, reducing the overall impacts of resource use, and improving the efficiency of such use.

The European Commission released a revised Directive 2012/19/EC in 2012, which replaced Directive 2002/96/EC on 14 February 2014. The major changes are:

- Increased scope within six new categories after the transitional period until August 2018;
- Successive increase of recycling targets until August 2018 concerning the categories in Annex III;
- WEEE (2012/19/EC) and its legal predecessor (2002/96/EC) cover electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) specified for voltages below 1000 Volt AC and below 1500 Volt DC and falling into one of the categories listed on the left-hand side if no explicit exclusion or exemption exists;
- Common elements of implementations are that producers shall mark and register their equipment in the country where it is put on the market. They shall meet recycling targets. For business-to-consumer (B2C) products, they must make financial provisions. For business-to-business (B2B) products (not intended for private users), they must plan contractual arrangements (take-back) for end-of-life treatment.

1. Temperature exchange equipment
2. Screens, monitors, and equipment containing screens having a surface greater than 100 cm^2
3. Lamps
4. Large equipment (any external dimension more than 50 cm)
5. Small equipment (no external dimension more than 50 cm)
6. Small IT and telecommunication equipment (no external dimension more than 50 cm)



UNIFE understanding

The UNIFE understanding is that electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) are:

- In items that are specifically designed for rolling stock or rail infrastructure or to be a part of a large-scale fixed installation or a large-scale stationary industrial tool: **they do not fall into the scope of the WEEE directive**.
- That is used for the repair, reuse, and updating of functionalities or the upgrading of capacities of rolling stock or rail infrastructure or a part of a large-scale fixed installation or a large-scale stationary industrial tool, especially systems put on the market before July 2011: **they do not fall into the scope of the WEEE directive.**
- Tests and services that are specially designed and necessary for rail systems and are an integral part of rolling stock or rail infrastructure, a large-scale stationary industrial tool, or a large-scale fixed installation: **they do not fall into the scope of the WEEE directive**.
- Tests and services that are specially designed and necessary for rail systems but are not integrated into rolling stock or rail infrastructure: **they are within the scope of the WEEE directive.**

UNIFE member companies request that the suppliers of EEE maintain the safety and quality standards of the supplied EEE.

Relevance of WEEE for Rail Systems after transitional period

The majority of equipment for the rail industry is not part of the scope of WEEE as it falls into one (or more) of the following exclusions as EEE specifically designed or for:

- Means of Transport for Persons and Goods,
- Large Scale Fixed Installations,
- Large Scale Stationary Industrial Tools, and
- Non-road mobile machinery for professional use.

This means WEEE's relevance to rolling stock or rail infrastructure is limited to a few products that belong to one of the six WEEE categories, are not excluded (see list above), and can operate independently of rolling stock or the infrastructure.

Examples of equipment used in rail applications that are considered in the scope of WEEE are typically portable items not specifically designed for rail applications, such as:

- Laptop computers, Computer screens, Keyboards and Mobile phones,
- Handheld equipment such as installation, test & maintenance tools,
- Some kitchen equipment in bistro wagons.

Exemptions

Even when equipment falls within the scope of the WEEE Directive, several exemptions must be carefully checked. Only when a component belongs to a WEEE product category and none of the existing exemptions applies must the component fully meet all WEEE requirements.

Industry Commitment

UNIFE member companies have instructed their suppliers of WEEE-covered equipment to mark their equipment according to Article 14(4) and to make the necessary provisions for take-back in the country where the product will be operated and where the equipment is likely to be disposed of during maintenance or end-of-life activities.

It is the responsibility of the owner of the product to make sure that the different parts of the product are disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner, for instance:

- handed over to licensed firms according to relevant legal obligations,
- in the case of equipment falling under WEEE, to deliver such equipment to the appropriate network installed in the respective country in line with the regulations of the WEEE directive.

Definitions mentioned in Article 3 of the WEEE Directive

- "**Electrical and Electronic Equipment**" or "**EEE**" means equipment which is dependent on electric currents or electromagnetic fields to work properly and equipment for the generation, transfer and measurement of such currents and fields and designed for use with a voltage rating not exceeding 1000 volts for alternating current and 1500 volts for direct current.
- "**Large equipment (any external dimension more than 50 cm)**" means Household appliances; IT and telecommunication equipment; consumer equipment; luminaires; equipment reproducing sound or images, musical equipment; electrical and electronic tools; toys, leisure and sports equipment; medical devices; monitoring and control instruments; automatic dispensers; equipment for the generation of electric currents.
- "**Large-scale Fixed Installation**" means a large-size combination of several types of apparatus and, where applicable, other devices, which are assembled, installed by professionals and intended to be used permanently in a pre-defined and dedicated location, and to be de-installed by professionals.
- "**Large-scale Stationary Industrial Tools**" means a large-size assembly of machines, equipment, and/or components functioning together for a specific application, permanently installed and de-installed by professionals at a given place, and used and maintained by professionals in an industrial manufacturing facility or research and development facility.
- "**Non-road mobile machinery**" means machinery with an onboard power source, the operation of which requires either mobility or continuous or semi-continuous movement between a succession of fixed working locations while working.
- "**Small equipment (no external dimension more than 50 cm)**" means household appliances; consumer equipment; luminaires; equipment reproducing sound or images, musical equipment; electrical and electronic tools; toys, leisure and sports equipment; medical

devices; monitoring and control instruments; automatic dispensers; equipment for the generation of electric currents.

- "**Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment**" or "**WEEE**" means electrical or electronic equipment (EEE) which is waste within the meaning of Article 3(1) of Directive 2008/98/EC, including all components, sub-assemblies and consumables which are part of the product at the time of discarding.
- **"Producer"** means any natural or legal person who, irrespective of the selling technique used:
    - is established in a Member State and manufactures EEE under his own name or trademark, or has EEE designed or manufactured and markets it under his name or trademark within the territory of that Member State;
    - is established in a Member State and resells within the territory of that Member State, under his own name or trademark, equipment produced by other suppliers, a **reseller** not being regarded as the 'producer' if the brand of the producer appears on the equipment, as provided for in the previous point;
    - is established in a Member State and places on the market of that Member State, on a professional basis, EEE from a third country or from another Member State; or
    - sells EEE by means of distance communication directly to private households or to users other than private households in a Member State, and is established in another Member State or in a third country.

  Whoever exclusively provides financing under or pursuant to any finance agreement shall not be deemed to be a 'producer' unless he also acts as a producer within the meaning of the previous four points.
- **"Distributor"** means any natural or legal person in the supply chain who makes an EEE available on the market. This definition does not prevent a distributor from being, at the same time, a producer within the meaning of the definitions above.