

END OF LIFE VEHICLES (ELV's)



There are around 33 million motor vehicles in use in the UK. These vehicles have an average lifespan of 13.5 years. Every year there are around 2 million new vehicles registered in the UK and a similar number scrapped. With each vehicle weighing an average of one tonne this equates to 2 million tonnes of vehicle waste each year. In addition there are large volumes of scrap tyres generated each year (over 50 million tyres in the UK in 2001).

When a car reaches the end of its useful life it is usually sold to a vehicle dismantler. The dismantler removes parts that can be sold for **reuse**, removes potentially polluting materials (e.g. oils, fluids and batteries) and sells the hulk to a shredding operation where a hammer mill breaks it into

finger-sized parts. **Ferrous** metals are removed by magnetic separation and non-**ferrous** metals are sorted mechanically and by hand. Most of the metal is recycled and the rest (known as automotive shredder residue or ASR – comprising plastics, foam, rubber etc) is generally disposed of in landfills although this material is also now being seen as having some potential value).

ELV's are identified as a priority waste stream in the National Waste Strategy¹ and are also now subject to new '**producer responsibility**' legislation. New Regulations impose stricter requirements on those handling ELV's and require producers and importers of vehicles to ensure that a high proportion of ELV's are recycled.

¹see National Waste Strategy Scotland factsheet



How do ELV's harm the environment?

The number of vehicles on the roads continues to increase and with it, the potential environmental impact associated with the scrapping of ELV's. It is essential that they are stored, treated, recycled or disposed of properly. For example, it takes only a small amount of waste oil or fuel to contaminate a large volume of water or to pollute soil. Batteries, brake fluids, antifreeze, mercury-containing switches and tyres are among other components that can pollute the environment or harm human health.

At present, **recycling** of metals from ELV's (which comprises up to 75% of the vehicle weight) is common practice but **recycling** of the remaining 25% of vehicles weight including plastic, glass, rubber, foam and textile fibres has not generally been physically or economically viable. This is beginning to change.

SEPA's role

SEPA's responsibilities include:

- Licensing and inspecting authorised treatment facilities for ELV's
- Enforcing ELV legislation in Scotland
- Advising on the removal of polluting materials from ELV's ('depolluting' them)

Further information

SEPA
www.sepa.org.uk

NetRegs
www.netregs.gov.uk

Waste Online
www.wasteonline.org.uk

DTI
www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/sectors/sustainability/elv/page30591.html

Defra
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/topics/producer-responsibility.htm

Motor Vehicle Dismantlers Association (MVDA)
www.mvda.co.uk

CARE
www.caregroup.org.uk

Keep Scotland Beautiful
www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/caruplift

What can you do to help?

According to Waste Online (www.wasteonline.org.uk), some of the things you can do are:

- Recycle your old oil and batteries at local authority **recycling** sites
- If replacing your car, choose a more fuel efficient one than at present.
- Buy retread tyres.
- Look out for products made from scrapped tyres, e.g. porous hosepipes, carpet underlay, pencil cases etc.
- If your car is no longer in working order, take it to a registered scrapyards. You can find your nearest on by visiting www.CarTakeBack.com or www.Autogreen.org
- When you dispose of your car, you must send its registration document to the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and obtain a Certificate of Destruction.



Related legislation

- **End of Life Vehicles Directive** sets recovery targets by weight for ELV's, restricts the content of certain hazardous substances in new vehicles and requires manufacturers and importers to fund ELV collection and **recycling**.
- **End of Life Vehicles (Storage & Treatment) (Scotland) Regulations 2003** lays down rules governing the dismantling, **recycling** and disposal of ELV's by authorised treatment facilities.
- **End of Life Vehicles (Producer Responsibility) Regulations 2005** establish collection systems to take back ELV's from 2007 and arrangements for meeting the Directive's recovery and **recycling** targets in the UK.

Glossary

Ferrous – metal containing steel

Licence – an official permission to own or use something, do a particular thing, or carry on a trade.

Producer responsibility – gives companies that place products on the market responsibility for their environmental impact, particularly when they reach the end of their life.

Recycling – means using things that have already been used to make new things (a new version of the same thing or something completely different), e.g. scrap metal is melted down.

Reuse – means using something again for the same purpose, e.g. a retread tyre.