

Management of end-of-life smoke detectors



Document Control

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Version Control

Version	Date	Amendments
1.0	June 2020	Original document
2.0	November 2025	Updated to include revisions from The Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 and to include accessibility changes

If you would like this document in an accessible format, such as large print, audio recording or braille, please contact SEPA by emailing our [Equalities mailbox](#).

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance has been developed by SEPA to provide clarity on the management of end-of-life smoke detectors in Scotland under [The Environmental Authorisations \(Scotland\) Regulations 2018 \(EASR\)](#) and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013 (WEEE).

This guidance only applies to ionisation chamber smoke detectors, which contain a small radioactive sealed source. They will be referred to as 'smoke detectors' throughout the rest of this guidance.

This guidance only considers the environmental aspects of end-of life-smoke detectors in Scotland.

For the rules on the management (other than the treatment and disposal) of smoke detectors, please refer to General Binding Rules (GBR) 2 in Chapter 1 of Schedule 9 of EASR. If you cannot comply with the GBR you will need a different type of authorisation from SEPA.

End-of-life options

WEEE regulations apply to all electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market in the UK covered by the scope of the regulations. These regulations were introduced to increase responsible re-use and recycling, and reduce the amount of WEEE going to landfill. End-of-life smoke detectors fall into this scope and are classed as WEEE. Disposal of the smoke detector in normal refuse is prohibited by the WEEE regulations. The radioactive sealed source must be removed from the smoke detector before treatment of the WEEE can begin. To remove the radioactive sealed source from the smoke detector you must be authorised under EASR.

Options to manage end of life smoke detectors include:

- Transfer to a facility authorised to remove the radioactive sealed source before treatment of the WEEE can begin.
- Return to producer (e.g. manufacturer, brand owner) or via a supplier.

- Remove the radioactive sealed source from the smoke detector if you are appropriately authorised under EASR.
- Transfer to a person authorised to receive smoke detectors.

You must check that any facility is appropriately authorised under EASR to manage the smoke detectors. If the smoke detectors are being collected, you must make sure the person collecting them is [authorised to carry waste](#).

SEPA has produced general [WEEE disposal guidance](#) which applies to smoke detectors.

What EASR authorisation do I need to remove the radioactive sealed source?

In Scotland, to remove the radioactive sealed source from the end-of-life smoke detector you must be authorised under EASR. If you can comply with the rules, this removal of the source and the source's subsequent management could be managed under GBR1: The management of a category 5 sealed source. If you cannot comply, you will need to apply for and be granted a permit by SEPA. For information on how to apply to SEPA for an authorisation please visit [SEPA's website](#).

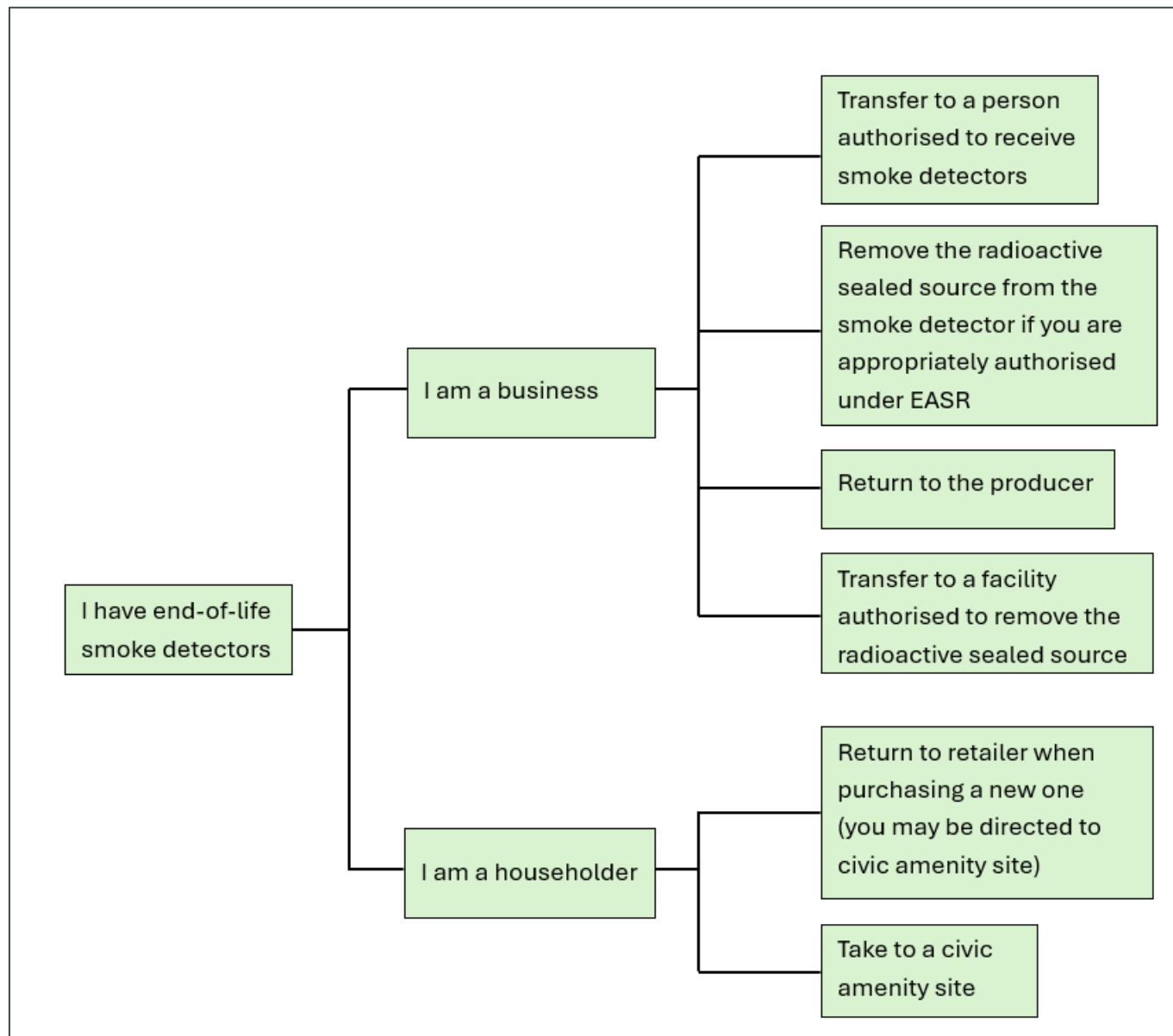
Information for householders

EASR and WEEE do not apply to householders managing their own domestic waste, however, SEPA promotes the environmentally sound management of WEEE devices and therefore advises the following disposal options for householders for end-of-life smoke detectors:

- You can take your smoke detectors to a civic amenity site, and they should accept it to be recycled under small mixed WEEE.
- You can take your smoke detectors to the retailer/distributor where you are purchasing a new one. This should be free of charge on a one-for-one basis however a retailer who funds local authority WEEE collection sites, may direct you there.

Visual Summary

Figure 1: Flowchart of end-of-life options for smoke detectors



Other legislation applicable to smoke detectors

Smoke detectors are also covered by other legislation including **occupational safety and transport**. These are enforced by other agencies. You must ensure you comply with **all** legislation applicable to smoke detectors.