

Third Party Certifications

Best Practices in Electronics Recycling

Many companies have become increasingly concerned with sustainability and environmental stewardship as the "green" movement has swept over corporate America. At the same time, both Federal and State governments have passed comprehensive legislation to both protecting the environment and ensure data privacy. The increasing volume of end-of-life electronics, coupled with the proliferation of product "take-back" programs, have boosted market demand for IT asset disposal services. In response, the number of electronics recyclers has increased dramatically.

However stringent the restrictions, the evening news is still full of horror stories of broken equipment winding up in overseas landfills and sensitive data inadvertently released to the public by careless or unscrupulous recyclers. How then can a consumer achieve peace of mind knowing that a company's end-of-life electronics are being disposed of in a secure and environmentally responsible manner?

One answer to this problem is insisting on having the electronics recycling vendor be certified by an accredited third party. While these certification programs have variations, they all share the following characteristics:

1. The ability to provide an all-encompassing "seal of approval"
2. An emphasis on Total Quality Management ("TQM") and/or ISO9001
3. The presences of an Environmental Management System and/or ISO 14001
4. Compliance with Health, Safety, and Security standards
5. Periodic audits by an independent third-party

One example of a national certification is the Recycling Industry Operating Standard ("RIOS"), a program sponsored by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries ("ISRI"). ISRI

represents over 1,600 recycling companies with approximately 6,000 facilities across the U.S. and over 30 countries. ISRI developed RIOS as means to integrate Quality, Environment, Health and Safety in to a single standard. In essence, RIOS combines the framework found in ISO 9000 (quality), ISO 14000 (environmental management), and ISO 18000 (health and safety). With ISRI's commitment to provide its members with a breadth of training and certification tools, the RIOS standard affords companies the ability to deploy a scalable QEH&S management system that is specifically focused on recycling requirements.

Firms seeking RIOS certification must undergo a formal, objective examination by an accredited third-party auditor. Participating companies are evaluated on a variety of criteria related to environmental management systems, quality programs, business performance and financial stability, employee health and safety programs, security systems, and overall operations management. The audits are performed by SGS, a company involved in registration to international quality and environmental standards. SGS employs more than 59,000 employees and operates over 1,000 offices and laboratories worldwide.

Another certification specifically focused on electronics recycling best practices and facilitated by the EPA, is R2 – "Responsible Recycling". Initially started in 2006, R2 has an unmatched open and multi-stakeholder development process. Representatives from the manufacturing sector (Dell/HP), electronics recyclers, asset recovery/ITAD firms, state and federal government agencies, and trade associations (including the Consumer Electronics Association, and International Association of Electronics Recyclers) were all involved in developing the next generation electronics recycling standard.

The R2 standard emphasizes reuse before recycle,



prohibition of illegal exports, domestic, implementation of an environmental management system, and the identification and proper management of “focus materials” that pose a potential threat to the environment. R2 is a fully vetted and accredited standard that is audited by registrars that perform ISO auditing services such as SGS, and Perry Johnson Registrars.

A final standard worth noting is the AAA Certification that is managed by the National Association for Information Destruction (“NAID”). This standard was developed by NAID specifically for companies that provide computer hard drive destruction and sanitization services. The program’s auditors verify the physical security of sanitization facilities, chain of custody, and audit trail. In addition, a separate independent forensic testing lab verifies the effectiveness of the quality control and overwriting process. To date NAID has certified more than 360 member locations that provide physical destruction of media, but has only recently developed a separate certification program for companies who sanitize computer hard drives.

Dag Adamson
President

LifeSpan Technology Recycling, Inc.

Let IAITAM Hear From You!

What do you want to see on the pages of ITAK

- IAITAM Best Practice Library
- Data and Hardware Disposal
- Legislation
- Software Compliance
- Tools
- Disaster Recovery
- Systems Integration
- Staffing ITAM
- Policy Management
- Program Development
- Asset Identification
- Vendor Negotiations...

Email: ITAK@iaitam.org
Or fax to +1.330.628.3289

For more information, call +1.866.9IAITAM
(+1.866.942.4826) or visit www.iaitam.org

