

TV Recycling Report Card Grading For: Panasonic

The Talk: After years of lobbying against producer takeback on the state and federal level, Panasonic has recently added the following statement to its global [website](#):
“Panasonic is one of the leading manufacturers supporting the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and is earnestly promoting product recycling worldwide.”
 This is a significant change of position for this company which spent years promoting policies to charge consumers recycling fees.



The Walk: Panasonic (along with Toshiba and Sharp) recently launched a recycling company called MRM, which was launched in January 2008 to comply with state mandated recycling programs in MN and TX (monitors only). On October 30, MRM announced the addition of 8 more states beginning November 1, although most of the added sites are in states where they are legally required to recycle starting next year. Panasonic is promising more details about their program in January 2009.

| Category | Possible Points | Points Earned | Details |
|---|-----------------|---------------|---|
| Scope of US takeback recycling program | 38 | 7 | |
| Offers free convenient national takeback recycling for their branded TVs for individual consumers | 25 | 5 | <p>Panasonic has announced that it has launched a national takeback program under its MRM recycling company, but actually, the program only operates in 10 states. MRM says it will take them 3 years to reach all 50 states, so they get only partial credit.</p> <p>Most of the sites are in states with laws that require takeback – including 69 sites in Minnesota, whose program is in effect, 15 sites in Connecticut, and 35 in Oregon – both states whose programs start in January. That means that MRM’s announcement of a “national program” consists of only 11 new regular collection sites (plus some events).</p> <p>Sites in additional states as of Nov 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA 2 CT 15 (Takeback required as of Jan 09) MN 69 (Takeback law in effect) NH 3 NJ 1 (only for events) NY 2 OR 35 (Takeback required as of Jan 09) PA 3 collection sites, 5 event locations TX 2 (Takeback law in effect for monitors) WI 1 |

| | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|--|
| Offers free national takeback recycling for a larger scope of their branded products in addition to TVs | 8 | 2 | Panasonic takes back its other consumer products in addition to TVs. We award partial credit here because this program is not yet national. |
| Offers free national takeback recycling for other customers – not just individual consumers | 3 | 0 | No, consumers only. |
| Offers to take products from other brands for free or a nominal charge | 2 | 0 | No. |
| Provides responsible recycling | 37 | 8 | |
| Signed Manufacturers Commitment to Responsible Electronics Recycling | 15 | 0 | They have not signed the Commitment. |
| Other public commitment to not export to developing countries/use prison labor/landfill/incinerate toxic materials* | 5 | 2 | The MRM website says they prohibit use of prison labor, which gets one point. It also says, “We will not allow the export of whole products for recycling” which gets one point, but that statement is a far cry from the kind of clear ban on exporting toxics to developing nations. |
| Publishes full recycling standards on company website | 5 | 0 | No standards posted. We have asked MRM to do this, and we believe they are considering it. |
| Use only E-Stewards as recyclers | 5 | 1 | One partner in the e-Stewards process. |
| Discloses recycling and refurbishing vendors on company website | 5 | 5 | MRM says they work with only 2 companies, CRT Processing, and Eco International. |
| Discloses countries where final disposal/recycling of toxic materials occurs | 7 | 0 | No information on final destination |
| Volumes and visibility | 15 | 2 | |
| Has ambitious collection and recycling goals expressed as a percent of sales or other measures | 2 | 0 | No stated goals. |
| Significant volume of e-waste collected and recycled nationally and publicly reported as a percent of sales or other measure | 10 | 1 | No reporting as percent of sales or other benchmark. Panasonic’s environmental website reports on volumes from Maine and Minnesota totaling 601 tons of TVs and monitors collected in 2007. ¹ But these are both legally mandated programs. |
| Easy to find recycling information on company website | 3 | 1 | The TV takeback program isn’t mentioned on the main environment page (which isn’t linked from the home page). The most obvious link to electronics recycling takes you to an |

¹ <http://www.panasonic.net/eco/recycle/region.html#us>

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | | industry association list of recyclers – making it seem like Panasonic doesn't even have its own program. |
| Public policy | 10 | 1 | |
| Statement of support and active work in support of producer takeback recycling legislation with performance goals for manufacturers at the state level | 5 | 1 | After years of leading a coalition of TV companies in opposition to producer responsibility, including lobbying against takeback bills, Panasonic's global website now reflects support for individual producer responsibility ² so they get 1 point for that. But they do not support goals nor do they support state legislation on takeback. |
| Statement of support and active work on federal legislation to ban the export of toxic electronic waste to developing nations | 5 | 0 | No statement of support |
| | Total Possible | Total Earned | |
| TOTAL SCORE | 100 | 18 | D |

Company websites

<http://www.mrmrecycling.com/index.htm> MRM site

<http://www.panasonic.net/eco/recycle/>

Grading Scale:

A: 81-100

D: 11-34

B: 61-80

F: 0-10

C: 35-60

² <http://www.panasonic.net/eco/recycle/>