

Move to simplify e-waste disposal

Ministry will increase collection centres and promote public participation

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PETALING JAYA: Efforts to improve electronic waste (e-waste) management are being stepped up, with plans to expand collection facilities and make disposal more accessible to the public, says the Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Ministry.

The ministry said access to collection centres is key to improving household e-waste recovery rates, as well as encouraging greater public participation in proper disposal practices.

To this end, it is working to expand collection facilities while also strengthening public awareness on the safe disposal and recycling of e-waste.

The ministry was responding to findings that Malaysia generates the third-highest amount of e-waste per capita in Asean, according to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

In the Global E-waste Monitor 2024 report, the institute revealed that each person in Malaysia produces an average of 12.2kg of e-waste annually, well above the global average of 7.8kg.

Across Asean, Singapore tops the list with 20.3kg per capita, followed by Brunei (19.9kg), while Thailand ranks fourth at 10.5kg.

Globally, the report estimates that 62 million tonnes of e-waste were generated in 2022.

Currently, Malaysia has 23 full e-waste recovery licensed facilities and 110 partial e-waste licensed facilities nationwide.

As of 2025, there are 157 centres registered with the Department of Environment nationwide for household e-waste collection, the ministry said.

“Going forward, the ministry plans to expand collection infrastructure through collaboration with local authorities, retailers, shopping complexes, licensed recovery facilities and industry players, ensuring more conven-

ient collection points in high-density areas and locations in need.

“We are also working closely with local authorities, retailers and licensed recycling operators to support this expansion,” the ministry said.

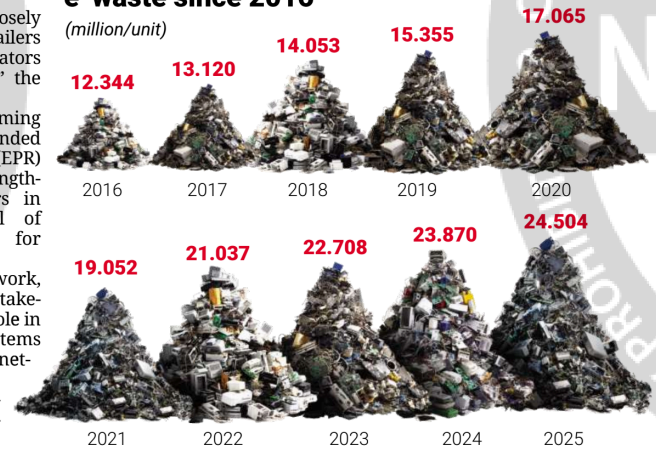
It added that the upcoming implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework will further strengthen the role of producers in ensuring easier disposal of e-waste through support for recycling.

“Under the EPR framework, producers and relevant stakeholders will play a greater role in developing take-back systems and financing collection networks,” it said.

The ministry acknowledged that Malaysia’s growing appetite for affordable technology, rapid device turnover, urbanisation and limited awareness of proper disposal practices are driving the surge in e-waste.

Malaysia’s rising e-waste since 2016

(million/unit)



Note: Categories of e-waste generated include air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, personal computers and mobile phones.

Source: Department of Environment

TheStargraphics

Old habits need to be discarded to make it work



e-legal waste: Electronic waste, including discarded computers and printers, uncovered inside one of two containers seized during an inspection at Westport, Port Klang. — Photo courtesy of AKPS

PETALING JAYA: Improper disposal habits, limited access to collection facilities in underserved areas and weak enforcement are among the key challenges in tackling Malaysia’s growing electronic waste (e-waste) problem, say environmental watchdogs.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia honorary secretary Mageswari Sangaralingam said despite being aware of proper disposal facilities, many households still discard e-waste as general waste which ends up in landfills.

She said some were disposed of at informal scrapyards, which eventually leads to toxic leakage.

Rural areas have fewer designated disposal centres, making urban hubs the most common disposal points, she added.

“People often dispose of e-waste indiscriminately because they are unaware of the health and environmental risks of e-waste, such as heavy metal contamination.

“Some lack knowledge about where official drop-off or e-waste collection points are located. Accessibility could also be an issue, as informal disposal is often more convenient, easier, and cheaper since people do not have

to travel far to reach drop-off points, particularly for larger e-waste items.

“These factors result in large amounts of e-waste ending up in landfills or illegal dumps instead of certified recovery facilities,” she added.

In comparing Malaysia’s situation with that of Japan and Europe, she noted that Japan’s Home Appliance Recycling Law of 2001 requires retailers to collect appliances such as air conditioners, televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines.

“Consumers pay collection, transport and recycling fees, while retailers and manufacturers are obligated to recycle at certified facilities, which ensures high recovery rates,” she said.

Similarly, the European Union’s Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive introduces Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), making electronics producers financially and operationally responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products.

“However, the European Commission’s 2025 evaluation found that only a few member states meet the 65% collection

target, and EPR systems differ widely between countries, limiting effectiveness,” she added.

She advised consumers to check whether retailers will take back old products when purchasing new electronics and to never discard e-waste with general rubbish.

Waste watchdog group Basel Action Network (BAN) researcher Wong Pui Yi said illegal e-waste recyclers often dump residues in oil palm plantations and villages.

“Some might discard e-waste in illegal dumpsites. It is difficult to estimate how much.

“Households are either keeping e-waste like old phones and laptops in their drawers or tossing it with general waste destined for landfills, especially small e-waste like children’s toys, wires and e-cigarettes,” she added.

Wong said developed countries have better collection for e-waste.

“What’s unacceptable is that the collectors and brokers in the rich countries are sending e-waste to be recycled or discarded in developing countries in Asia and Africa, despite knowing that many countries like Malaysia and Thailand have banned the importation of e-waste,” she said.