



FAQs: How e-Stewards® Certification Works

Why should recyclers pursue e-Stewards certification?

The e-Stewards certification program provides a true marketplace differentiator in an industry that is too often guilty of irresponsible toxic trade.

The e-Stewards certification uniquely offers a means by which electronics recyclers and asset managers can provide customers assurance that their operations maintain a comprehensive environmental management system; that the system includes accountability for the entire recycling chain of toxic materials; and that it incorporates best practices for toxic materials, worker safety and protection, responsible reuse, data security, and export controls that conform to international law.

How does the verification system work in the e-Stewards certification program?

e-Stewards certification relies on accredited certification bodies to provide annual, independent on-site auditing to the e-Stewards Standard. Accreditation is currently provided by ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB), and additional accreditation bodies globally will be members of the International Accreditation Forum. This rigorous verification system features multi-layer accountability, and is closely witnessed and monitored by BAN's certification consultant.

What are the anticipated costs of becoming a certified e-Stewards recycler?

There are three primary cost areas to be considered.

First, there are the internal start-up costs. A candidate must expend the resources necessary to ready their company for conformance with the e-Stewards Standard, including the establishment of an ISO 14001 environmental management system which incorporates all e-Stewards' performance requirements, including occupational health and safety. This cost depends on how much work is required.

The second cost is the annual cost of being audited by an accredited e-Stewards certification body, which is contracted on a 3-year cycle, and includes auditor travel expenses. This is paid to the independent certification body. These costs vary, depending on the size and complexity of operations, and the certifying body used. Small companies with one site, manual production, and existent ISO certification have paid as little as \$4,000 to complete the initial audit. Large companies with 10+ sites have paid \$50,000 for all sites combined. Remember, e-Stewards certification includes ISO 14001, so it's a two-for-one audit, unless a current ISO registration is transferred.

The third cost is the annual Marketing and Licensing Fee payable to the Basel Action Network. This fee is derived from a sliding scale based on total annual revenues a company derives from processing e-waste. This fee enables the administration of the certification program and promotion of e-Stewards recyclers. The fee schedule is found on the e-Stewards website. For example, a company with annual revenues of less than \$1 million derived from e-waste processing will pay an annual license and marketing fee of \$500, and a company with revenue of \$6 million will pay \$5,400. A company with e-waste revenues of \$80 million or over will pay the maximum of \$90,000 per year. The average annual fee is between \$3,000 and \$6,000 per year.

Is the License and Marketing Fee tax deductible?

Even though BAN is a charitable organization, because the License and Marketing Fee is not a donation but rather a "fee for service," it is not tax deductible.

Does the e-Stewards Standard ban all exports of e-waste?

No. The standard is designed to be consistent with the Basel Convention and the Basel Ban Amendment to that United Nations Environment Program Convention. The e-Stewards Standard only bans defined hazardous wastes from being traded and only from developed to developing countries. Equipment exported for re-use must be tested for functionality if it contains hazardous materials. If it is functional then it can be exported as long as the receiving country allows it. Likewise, commodity materials and non-hazardous wastes such as scrap aluminum, glass, paper and plastics can be freely exported.

How is the e-Stewards program governed?

Currently, the e-Stewards Standard is governed by BAN, a US charitable organization (501(c) 3), which is governed by a board of directors. The certification, however, is independent and is conducted by certifying bodies accredited by ANAB (ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board).

The ISO 14001 part of the Standard is governed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and their US affiliate American National Standards Institute (ANSI). BAN is globally licensed to use the ISO 14001 EMS standard within the e-Stewards Standard.

In August of 2010, the e-Stewards Leadership Council was created, and is currently comprised of representatives of OEMs, recyclers, businesses, government, collectors, and NGOs. This group provides advisory oversight of the e-Stewards Initiative, including the certification, the standard and the marketing program. Eventually, the governance of the program is envisaged to be spun off to a dedicated and separate organization with continued links to BAN and key stakeholders.

Do companies that qualified for the older Pledge program now have to become certified?

Yes. If a company wishes to retain its status within the e-Stewards Initiative it will have become certified by September 1, 2011. Until that date, pledged e-Stewards Recyclers can still be designated as Pledged e-Stewards, are distinguished from certified e-Stewards, and may utilize the original e-Stewards logo without the gold word "Certified" underneath.

Why does BAN require ISO 14001 as part of the e-Stewards Standard?

The ISO 14001 environmental management system standard is the global "gold" standard for ensuring top management oversight and continual improvement of environmental impacts. By using this global standard as the core, it enables certification and accreditation bodies to have instant familiarity with and knowledge of the structure of the e-Stewards Standard. ISO 14001 provides an excellent framework in which our industry-specific performance requirements are inserted. Recyclers that have achieved e-Stewards certification can choose between having one combined certificate or separate e-Stewards and ISO certificates.

EMS systems alone cannot ensure environmentally sound management but, together with well-crafted industry-specific performance standards, can provide the mechanism wherein a company can ensure day-to-day conformity and environmentally optimal performance.

Do companies with multiple sites have to have all of their sites certified?

Yes, over time. In order to ensure customers that an e-Steward-branded company conforms to the standard, all of its locations must become certified within 18 months of the initial certification. However, sampling of sites may be conducted in accordance with sampling methodology in ISO 17021 when multi-site certification is requested. When this is used, all locations eventually have on-site audits.