

Re: RoHS just a thought

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.electronics.basics/2007-06/msg00535.html>

- *From:* Chris Jones <luginut808@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 15 Jun 2007 22:17:19 +0100
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Bob Masta wrote:

On Fri, 15 Jun 2007 07:56:40 GMT, Eeyore
<rabbitsfriendsandrelations@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"greenplanetsolutions@xxxxxxxx" wrote:

What do you think?

The general consensus among all the electronic engineers I know is that the whole lead-free thing is 100% barmy and is a solution looking for a problem.

No-one I know wants to make equipment that will be less reliable (lead free).

Stop to consider why the military, aerospace (AIUI) and certain telecoms/networking are exempt.

Furthermore, the regulations (certainly in the EU) regarding documentation are so excessive that no small company can ever actually afford to comply fully. It's simply bureaucracy gone totally mad.

Personally, I'm all in favor of making things kinder to the environment. The problem with lead-free solders, however, is that they are simply not an acceptable solution. The issue is "tin whiskers" which grow from the so-called solder at an alarming rate and can short to adjacent conductors. It's hard to imagine that anyone could seriously consider this as an acceptable replacement for leaded solder.

Re: RoHS just a thought

My first reaction to all this was that we should just do a better job of diverting electronics devices from the landfills, and into some sort of material recovery stream. But these days "electronics" might be in almost anything, including kids' sneakers. If the RFID proponents get their wish, electronics will be in damn near *everything*.

What's the answer?

How about make all of the disposable consumer crap lead free except offer a blanket exception to allow 5% leaded solder in any product which comes with a 5 year or greater warranty, and up to 36% lead if the warranty exceeds 15 years. I think that companies that offer a long warranty will put more thought into making the product last longer, and they should be given the best materials to achieve the lowest total amount of pollution (which must include the energy and materials that goes into making lead-free electronics that fails and is scrapped after a couple of years due to tin whiskers). The warranty would need to be backed by a pre-paid voucher on the appliance for shipping to the manufacturer within the warranty period or shipping to a proper recycling facility thereafter. It would be reasonable to require the manufacturer to buy insurance to protect the warranty service in the event that they might go out of business within the warranty period (as otherwise this would be a cheap get-out for unscrupulous companies), but any "insurance", "recycling scheme" or membership fees should be set at a fixed price per kilogram of electronics content sold, rather than the kind of annual per-company bribes / protection money / membership fees / WEEE registration that penalises small businesses and start-ups, and favours only the largest companies (and therefore has been implemented).

Chris