

Lead-acid Batteries Statement

Sprint addresses critical environmental issue, plans full lifecycle policy in 2013

In 2011, Sprint received a letter from the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs ([IPE](#)), an environmental NGO in China, regarding a relationship Sprint appeared to have with a lead-acid battery manufacturing facility in China that had a poor record on environmental, health and safety issues. Sprint determined it had not purchased batteries from the facility in question; rather, the batteries purchased from this supplier were produced in a U.S.-based facility in Georgia. Sprint received written confirmation of this from FIAMM on September 9, 2011. Sprint then embarked upon an overall assessment of the company's supply chain practices for lead-acid batteries.

IPE connected Sprint with its U.S.-based partner, Occupational Knowledge International ([OK International](#)), for assistance in developing a more comprehensive lead-acid battery policy; since the end of 2011, Sprint has been assessing its supplier selection, management and performance processes both on the front-end (purchasing batteries from responsible manufacturers) and back-end (where retired batteries are safely recycled or reused). Sprint has worked with its first-tier suppliers to determine:

- Where the lead-acid batteries and their lead-related components are manufactured and by whom;
- What environmental non-compliance notices the main battery manufacturers had received from regulatory agencies from 2009-2011;
- Any corrective actions taken to address them; and
- Whether the primary battery manufacturers meet the [BEST Standard 1001 for Lead Battery Manufacturers](#).

Sprint also determined in which countries the decommissioning and recycling of lead-acid batteries were being processed by its vendors and whether those vendors do so in the U.S. Based on its findings, Sprint established the following guidance in February 2013:

“Sprint recognizes present and potential impacts to the environment, surrounding communities and occupations associated with the lead-acid battery recycling process outside the United States. Given the high standard for operations set by federal regulators in the United States, Sprint will endeavor to direct the recycling of lead-acid batteries to facilities operated in the United States in its commercial agreements for these services going forward. Sprint intends to continue this approach until lead-acid battery recycling plants outside the United States are operating under equivalent or substantially similar environmental and occupational standards.”

Sprint plans to incorporate this practice into a full lifecycle policy on lead-acid batteries in 2013 that will likely cover these points, as well:

- When feasible, Sprint will purchase lead-acid batteries manufactured in the U.S., where the environmental regulation and monitoring of operations are relatively robust.
- When purchasing lead-acid batteries manufactured outside the U.S., Sprint will work with its first-tier suppliers to secure assurance that the manufacturers and sub-vendors responsible for making the batteries and their lead-related components are following BEST Standard 1001 for Lead Battery Manufacturers or a similar set of acceptable operating practices.