

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: RIOS™ AND R2/RIOS™

What is RIOS™?

The Recycling Industry Operating Standard™ (RIOS™) is the recycling industry's management system standard for quality, environment, health and safety (QEH&S). Specifically designed for the recycling industry, RIOS™ integrates key operational elements found in other standards, such as ISO 9001 (Q), ISO 14001 (E), and OHSAS 18001 (H&S), bringing them together into one streamlined management system.

What is R2/RIOS™?

The R2/RIOS™ certification is solely for electronics recyclers to demonstrate to customers that electronics equipment is being recycled with the highest standards for environmental control, worker health and safety, and data and facility security. R2/RIOS™ is a combination of the Responsible Recycling (R2) Practices and the Recycling Industry Operating Standards™ (RIOS™). R2 was developed by a broad-based cooperative of electronics recycling stakeholders that included the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), state governments, manufacturers, recyclers, trade groups and non-governmental organizations.

Who gets certified and who recycles with certified facilities?

Recycling facilities that process materials including brass, copper, electronics, ferrous metals, glass, lead, magnesium, paper, rubber, precious metals, textiles, tin, zinc and more are achieving RIOS™ and R2/RIOS™ certifications. Regardless of where a recycler is located or how large it is, there are no limits to becoming certified.

Organizations that insist upon responsible recycling of their materials are increasingly requiring their recyclers have RIOS™ and R2/RIOS™ certifications. The electronics market in particular is demanding that recycling facilities demonstrate conformance to high standards for data protection, environmental safeguards, workplace safety and appropriate due diligence for exports.

How does certification solve my business challenges?

Certification contributes to profitability by helping to retain existing clients, secure new clients, improve a company's competitive advantage and customer satisfaction with a facility's services, maintaining safer and more environmentally sound operations, improving morale among employees and projecting a better company image. Certification is an investment that's worth the time and money.

How does R2/RIOS™ differ from other certifications?

R2/RIOS™ allows electronics recyclers to get certified regardless of their or their partners' geographic location. R2/RIOS™ is an accomplishment that rewards rather than penalizes with excessive fees and exploitation of sensitive proprietary data.

- R2 was developed through a transparent, multi-stakeholder consensus process led by the EPA, state governments, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), NGOs, refurbishers and recyclers
- R2 holds the highest standards for data protection, adhering to HIPAA regulations
- R2 requires proper data destruction to wipe out confidential information stored on electronics
- R2/RIOS™ remains the sole program that combines quality, environmental, health and safety and data security requirements into a single management system

WHY WORK WITH AN R2/RIOS™ FACILITY?

Three to four million tons of electronics equipment are recycled each year, making digital privacy, employee safety and environmental responsibility primary concerns. As the electronics recycling industry continues to burgeon, the market has stipulated that electronics recycling facilities operate at the most responsible level. R2/RIOS™ was created to meet that market demand.

Specifically designed for electronics recycling facilities, R2/RIOS™ offers guidance and necessary tools to comply with industry requirements and federal regulations to protect personal and other sensitive data, and to help customers meet corporate responsibility goals.

Companies committed to doing the right thing prefer to work with an R2/RIOS™ facility. R2/RIOS™ provides assurance that reuse and recycling are the foremost objectives in the lifecycle of electronics, yielding many environmental benefits. Those benefits include decreasing the amount of materials sent to landfills and returning tested, functional electronics equipment and commodity-grade materials back into the marketplace in the U.S. and abroad. This gives companies confidence that their electronics are being recycled with the highest regard for the environment and the health and safety of employees and the public.

An R2/RIOS™ facility undergoes several audits by accredited third parties who verify conformance to responsible recycling standards. In addition to establishing quality, environmental, health and safety standards, R2/RIOS™ mandates proper management and execution of exports, providing confidence to companies that materials being transported overseas are safe and legal.

In the U.S., certification has been increasingly included in state regulatory language. Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont and Virginia laws each reference electronics recycling certification.

R2/RIOS™ is the highest achievable certification in the industry.

- Developed through a transparent, multi-stakeholder consensus process led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state governments, original equipment manufacturers, NGOs and recyclers
- Holds the highest standards for data protection, adhering to HIPAA regulations
- Requires proper data destruction to wipe out confidential information stored on electronics, protecting individuals and organizations
- Serves as the singular electronics recycling standard that promotes safe, environmentally sound practices for domestic and international trade
- Remains the sole program that combines quality, environmental, health and safety requirements into a single management system

Working with an R2/RIOS™-certified facility enhances a company's corporate responsibility efforts and promotes its reputation as a brand dedicated to the highest standards for recycling electronics and IT assets.