

## Technology and the environment

### Sauter's path to RoHS conformity

When EU directive 2002/95/EC comes into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006, manufacturers and suppliers of electrical and electronic equipment throughout Europe will face some important changes.

The purpose of this legislation, which is widely known as RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances), is to cut down on the use of harmful substances in order to minimise the risk to human beings and the environment associated with the manufacture, use and disposal of electrical and electronic equipment. In order to achieve this, maximum concentrations of the following substances have been laid down for a variety of electrical and electronic equipment:

- Lead
- Mercury
- Cadmium
- Hexavalent chromium
- Fire retardants PBB (polybrominated biphenyl) and PDBE (polybrominated diphenyl ether)

This is intended to ensure that no new electrical or electronic equipment that exceeds the defined limits can be brought into circulation after July 1<sup>st</sup>. All manufacturers and suppliers in the industry are therefore obliged to implement the measures within the next few months.

Even though Sauter products are not subject to the RoHS directive, the company has been working feverishly for over a year to ensure that all of its products are able to fulfil the terms of the directive well before it comes into force.

One of the first steps was to change the electronics manufacturing processes to 'lead-free' production. One objective was to replace leaded solder with unleaded solder. Extensive SMD and wave soldering tests produced positive results, enabling the company to switch its electronics sections

over to 'unleaded' production in August of last year.

In the next step on the way to RoHS conformity, all components used in Sauter products were checked to determine whether they contained any hazardous substances. Where necessary, products containing harmful substances were replaced by ones that pose little risk to health.

Sauter has, therefore, achieved a decisive lead over its competitors by complying with the RoHS directive well before it comes into effect.



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