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# *Current Status of Home Appliance Recycling in Japan*

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In Japan, the Home Appliances Recycling Law has been enforced in full from April 2001. Japanese laws related to the environment and recycling are leading the world and are called “Japan models”. As a result the accomplishments of these laws are attracting attention throughout the world. Nationwide implementation of the Home Appliances Recycling Law, including deployment of home appliance recycling plants in Japan, is summarized below.

## 1. Gist of Home Appliances Recycling Law

- 1) Manufacturers and sellers of home appliances are obligated to take back used home appliances.
- 2) Manufacturers are obligated to recycle retrieved used home appliances.
- 3) Those who discard used home appliances must pay a disposal fee when home appliances are discarded.
- 4) Flow of these movements is checked by manifests.
- 5) Product Items Subject to the Law: TV sets, refrigerators, washing machines and air conditioners

## 2. Current Status of Used Home Appliances in Japan

Table 2: Estimate of Major Four Home Appliance Items Discarded (Unit: Thousands)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Color TV Sets	7,937	8,280	8,687	9,031	9,175	9,102
Electric Refrigerators	3,749	3,832	3,940	4,071	4,210	4,331
Electric Washing Machines	3,925	4,075	4,294	4,530	4,719	4,817
Room Air Conditioners	2,678	2,666	2,774	3,023	3,378	3,788
Total	18,289	18,853	19,695	20,655	21,482	22,038

Source: 1997 Survey by Ministry of International Trade and Industry  
(Currently Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)

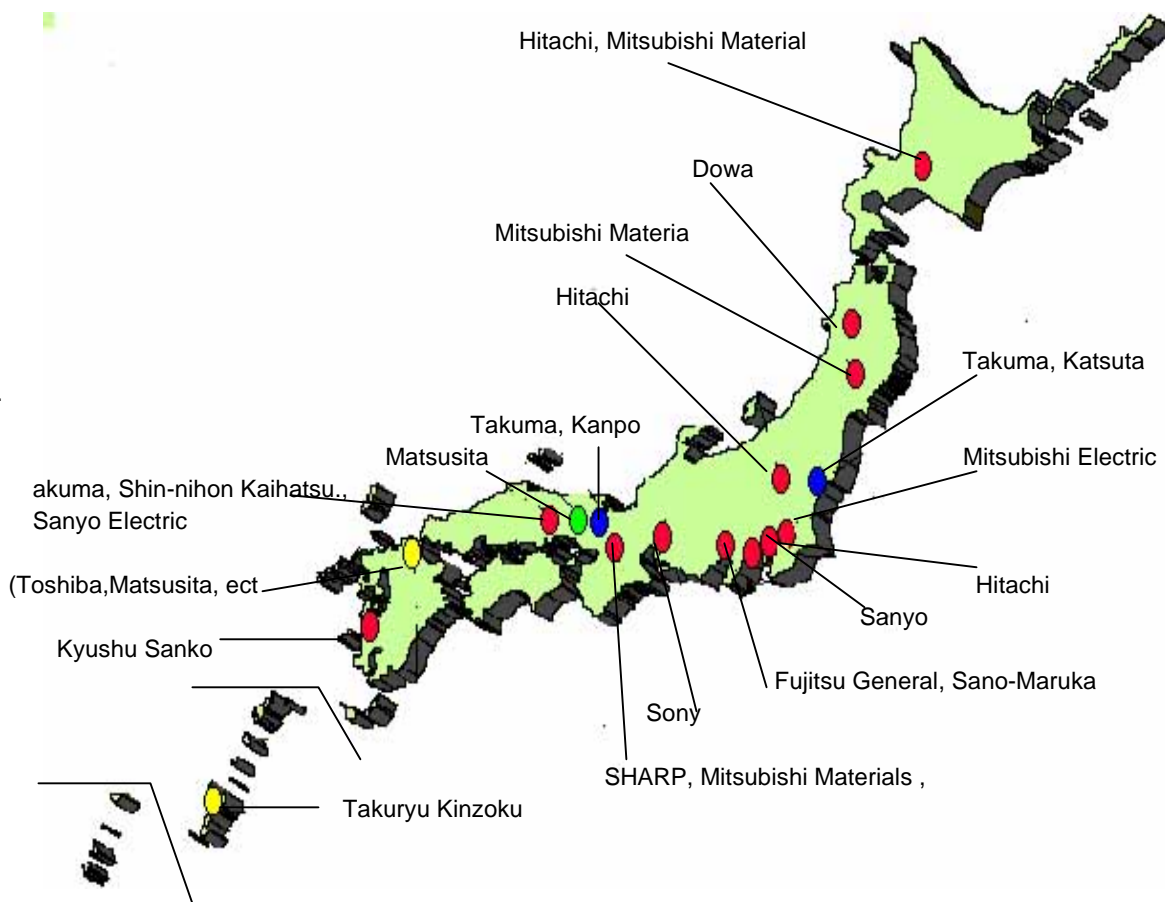
## 3. Nationwide Deployment of Home Appliance Recycling Plants

The Japanese home appliance manufacturers have built recycling plants throughout Japan to receive and recycle used home appliances. The manufacturers are grouped into Group A (Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., Toshiba Corp. and others) and Group B (Hitachi, Ltd., Sanyo Electric Co., Ltd., Sharp Corp., Sony Corp., Fujitsu General Ltd., Mitsubishi Electric Corp. and others). Within these groups, the manufacturers are implementing the law by cooperatively building and operating recycling plants and depots. Other companies and importers contract Group A or B or corporate bodies designated by the law for disposal of used home appliances. Fig. 3 shows locations of recycling plants in Japan. Groups A and B each have announced about 190 depots in Japan that operate in close cooperation with the recycling plants.

#### 4. Recycling

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry makes public announcement of used home appliances recovered in its home page every month. In May 2001, about 570,000 units of these four product items were discarded and processed. The law is being implemented smoothly as anticipated. “Illegal discarding” to evade payment of the disposal fee is slightly increasing, but has not become an issue. The law has got off to a smooth start, but statistical figures need to be watched in the future also in order to make a precise appraisal.

Fig. 3 Location of Recycling Plants for Home Appliance in Japan



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