

EPD successfully intercepts three cases of import of hazardous electronic waste by air and by sea (with photos)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted three cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from the United States, Korea and Bangladesh at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. The two importers, namely Chung Wah Hoi Trading Company Limited and Sum Wah Trading (Hong Kong) Limited, as well as a trader involved in these cases, were convicted at Eastern Magistrates' Courts and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on June 3 and 4 and today (June 10) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO). The parties concerned were fined a total of \$63,000.

The EPD has all along been striving to intercept hazardous e-waste entering Hong Kong through different channels. In addition, the department has been proactively strengthening the co-operation and exchange of intelligence with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED). With the assistance of the C&ED, the EPD intercepted two batches of air cargo and a sea container at HKIA and the Kwai Chung Container Terminals respectively from November last year to January this year. The air cargoes and the container were claimed to include liquid crystal display panels, mobile phone motherboards and laptops. After inspection, they were found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste, including waste flat panel displays (FPDs), waste printed circuit boards (PCBs) and waste batteries, with a total market value of about \$700,000. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted hazardous e-waste to the places of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments. The department also instigated prosecutions against the two importers and the trader concerned under the WDO.

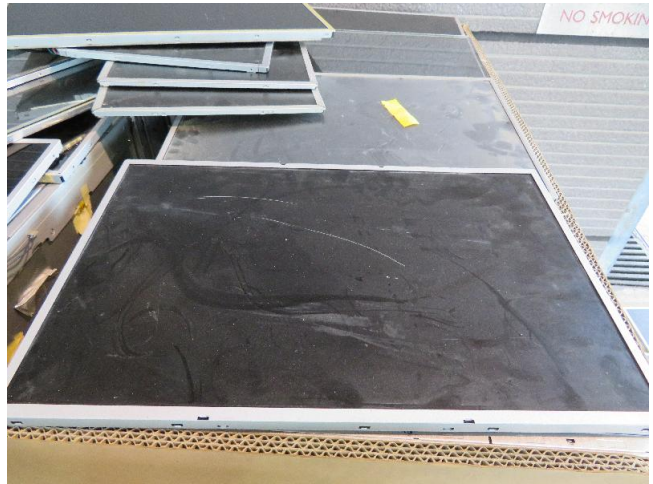
An EPD spokesman stressed that waste FPDs, waste PCBs and waste batteries are hazardous e-waste containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. The EPD will continue to rigorously combat the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste to protect the environment.

The spokesman reminded importers of the waste recycling trade not to illegally import (including import into or transshipment through Hong Kong) or export hazardous waste. According to the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to import or export hazardous waste without obtaining a valid permit beforehand. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

For more information about the control of chemical waste, please visit

the EPD's website:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.



Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for first quarter of 2019

Business receipts in value terms of many major service industries showed increases of different magnitudes in the first quarter of 2019 when compared with the first quarter of 2018, according to the provisional figures of business receipts indices released today (June 10) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD).

Comparing the first quarter of 2019 with the first quarter of 2018, a double-digit increase was recorded in business receipts of the insurance industry (+13.6%). The real estate industry and accommodation services industry also reported noticeable increases of 9.8% and 9.6% in business receipts respectively.

On the other hand, the courier industry recorded a decrease of 11.0% in business receipts during the same period, followed by the financing (except banking) (-6.0%), wholesale (-4.0%), and import/export trade (-3.1%) industries.

Analysed by service domain, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain increased by 3.9% year-on-year during the same period, whereas those of the computer and information technology services domain decreased by 3.6% year-on-year.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, business receipts in value terms of many major service industries recorded increases

of different magnitudes in the first quarter of 2019 when compared with the fourth quarter of 2018. In particular, business receipts of the real estate industry increased by 15.1%. On the other hand, the warehousing and storage industry registered a decrease of 6.0% in business receipts during the same period, followed by the courier industry (-4.9%).

Comparing the first quarter of 2019 with the fourth quarter of 2018 and on a seasonally adjusted basis, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain increased by 2.6%, whereas those of the computer and information technology services domain decreased by 7.6%.

Table 1 presents the business receipts indices and their corresponding year-on-year rates of change in respect of selected service industries and service domains for the recent five quarters, while Table 2 shows the corresponding quarter-to-quarter rates of change in the business receipts indices for the recent five quarters based on the seasonally adjusted series.

Starting from the first quarter of 2019, business receipts indices of service industries and service domains have been re-referenced, taking year 2015 as the new reference period in place of the previous reference year of 2008. The re-referencing from 2008 to 2015 does not affect their year-on-year percentage changes contained in Table 1.

The coverage of the real estate industry has been enhanced since the first quarter of 2019 and the new series has been backcasted to the first quarter of 2012. The old series with 2008 as the reference year will continue to be compiled up till the fourth quarter of 2019 and will be provided to users upon request.

The revised figures of business receipts indices for the first quarter of 2019 will be released at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?subjectID=7&tableID=093&ID=0&productType=8) and relevant publications of the C&SD starting from July 19, 2019.

Data for compiling the business receipts indices are mainly based on the Quarterly Survey of Service Industries conducted by the C&SD, supplemented by relevant data provided by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

A service domain differs from a service industry in that it comprises those economic activities which straddle different industries but are somehow related to a common theme. It may include all activities carried out by all establishments in a service industry that is closely related to the domain. For a service industry that is less closely related, however, only a portion of the establishments in the industry or even only part of the economic activities of the establishments is related to the domain. Taking the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain as an example, it includes all services of hotels and travel agents, and some (those involving visitors as customers) but not all of the services of restaurants, retailers and transport operators.

The classification of service industries follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the report "Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries, First Quarter 2019". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?productCode=B1080006).

Members of the public who have enquiries about the business receipts indices may contact the Business Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7267 or email: business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Application for list of establishments from Central Register of Establishments](#)

The Census and Statistics Department maintains a computerised Central Register of Establishments which contains information relating to some 420 000 active establishments in Hong Kong. Information kept in the Register is updated on a quarterly basis through feedback from various surveys of the department and administrative returns from relevant government departments. Information in respect of the first quarter of 2019 is now updated in the Register.

The Register serves mainly as the sampling frame for various economic surveys conducted by the department. In addition, many other government departments and private organisations also make use of the disclosable particulars kept in the Register for their surveys, publicity, business promotion, customer classification and research work. These disclosable particulars cover the name, address, type of business and employment size class of the establishments. They are available to the public in the following two forms.

20% sample listing

A sample listing containing 20% of the records randomly selected from the Register, together with disclosable particulars of the establishments, is available to users. Users may apply for all or part of the records in the 20% sample listing in writing by providing the following information:

* Particulars of the applicant (including name, position, organisation, address, telephone, fax and email);

* Details of the project (including name, purpose, expected completion date,

and specifications of information required such as industries, employment sizes and districts); and

* Medium of delivering the information (e.g. photocopy or CD-R and file format such as Visual FoxPro, Excel or text, if applicable).

The application can be faxed to 2827 2296, emailed to cre@censtatd.gov.hk or posted to the Employment Statistics and Central Register of Establishments Section, Census and Statistics Department, 20/F, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

The information can be supplied in the form of CD-R or photocopies at the following rates:

* CD-R – a charge of about \$1,630 per listing, compiled to the user's requirements (exact amount depending on the complexity of the job concerned);

* Photocopies – a ready, standard listing is available for photocopying (in part if desired). A charge of \$1.30 per page is levied.

Matching operation with specified establishments

Users may apply to conduct matching operations for a list of establishments in their databases and then extract disclosable particulars for the matched establishments from the Register. The matching operation will be done using the application program supplied by the user and conducted on the computing facilities in the Department. Both the name and address of establishment will be used as matching keys.

Users may apply for this service item by submitting a proposal of the matching operation to the department. The proposal should cover the intended use of the information derived from the matching operation, the specifications of the establishment database provided by the user, the details of the matching process and the specifications of the output data.

The information can be supplied in the form of CD-R. A charge will be levied at the following rates:

* a minimum charge of about \$5,100 for the service required (exact amount depending on the complexity of the matching operation conducted); plus

* \$1 per matched record with information supplied to the user.

Enquiries

Further details about the above service items can be obtained from the Employment Statistics and Central Register of Establishments Section of the department at Tel: 2582 4760; fax: 2827 2296; or email: cre@censtatd.gov.hk.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, June 10, 2019 is 105.4 (up 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, June 8, 2019 was 105.3 (same as last Thursday's index).

Two owners fined over \$100,000 for not complying with orders to remove rooftop illegal structure for domestic use at industrial building

Two co-owners of an industrial premises in Tuen Mun were fined over \$100,000 for failing to comply with three orders issued under sections 24(1), 25(2)(b) and 26(1) of the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap 123) at Tuen Mun Magistrates' Court last month.

The orders involved one illegal structure with an area of about 220 square metres erected on the roof of an industrial building at San Ping Circuit, Tuen Mun. The illegal structure was divided into eight cubicles for domestic use. As the unauthorised building works (UBWs) were carried out without prior approval from the Buildings Department (BD), contravening the BO, a removal order under section 24(1) of the BO was served on the co-owners of the premises.

Moreover, the premises has been changed to domestic use without permission, posing a serious fire and safety risk to the occupants of the premises and rendering the premises dangerous, which has also contravened the BO. Two orders issued under sections 25(2)(b) and 26(1) of the BO respectively were served concurrently with the removal order, requiring the owners to discontinue the domestic use and to carry out certain remedial works before the specified time.

As the owners failed to comply with the three orders upon the expiry of the time limits, they were prosecuted by the BD with three charges under sections 40(1BA) and 40(1B)(b) of the BO. They were convicted of all the charges at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 31 and fined \$111,900 in total.

"UBWs may adversely affect the structure and fire safety of a building.

Furthermore, unauthorised change in use of an industrial building to domestic use will increase the fire risks. Both situations can lead to serious consequences. Owners should seek professional advice before carrying out any building works or change in use in their premises. The BD will continue its enforcement action against these situations," a spokesman for the BD said today (June 10).

Pursuant to section 40(1BA) of the B0, any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with an order served on him or her under section 24(1) of the B0, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of \$200,000 and to imprisonment for one year, as well as a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence has continued.

Moreover, pursuant to section 40(1B)(b) of the B0, any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with an order served on him or her under section 25(2) or section 26(1) of the B0, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of level 5 and to imprisonment for one year, as well as a further fine of \$5,000 for each day that the offence has continued.