

Dah Chong Hong Limited convicted of contravening Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance

Dah Chong Hong Limited was convicted and fined \$26,200 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (September 1) for contravening various provisions under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (PERO) when selling refrigerators and washing machines.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said the department received a complaint in December last year that when a member of the public was purchasing a washing machine in a department store, staff there made a claim that customers must contact recyclers on their own to recycle their old washing machines. During an investigation, EPD enforcement officers discovered that Dah Chong Hong was renting a stall in the department store through a short-term tenancy to sell electrical equipment. During the period, Dah Chong Hong did not provide consumers with a free statutory removal service, and failed to inform consumers of its obligation to provide such a service as well as its relevant terms. In addition, Dah Chong Hong also did not provide its customers with receipts containing the prescribed wording. After collecting evidence, the EPD prosecuted Dah Chong Hong for failing to meet the relevant requirements under the PERO.

The spokesman emphasised that according to the PERO, which came into effect on August 1, 2018, when distributing regulated electrical equipment (REE), sellers must have a removal service plan endorsed by the EPD, and proactively inform consumers in writing of the sellers' obligation to provide a free statutory removal service as well as its relevant terms. Moreover, sellers must arrange a free removal service for consumers to dispose of waste equipment of the same type and provide a recycling label as well as a receipt containing the prescribed wording when distributing REE.

The spokesman reminded all the relevant sellers that they have an obligation to comply with the PERO when they are selling REE, no matter whether on consignment or in stalls under a short-term tenancy. They must not make false statements to consumers or deliberately conceal the terms of their statutory removal service with a view to avoiding the relevant legal liability. Otherwise, they may contravene the PERO. First-time offenders are liable to maximum fines ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000. Maximum fines ranging from \$10,000 to \$200,000 may be imposed on a subsequent conviction.

The spokesman urged members of the public to make a report to the EPD immediately if they find any seller making false statements or not complying with the aforementioned requirements when purchasing regulated electrical and electronic equipment. The EPD will consistently take strict enforcement action against sellers who violate the PERO.