

# Disposal licensing control and import/export control of waste regulated electrical equipment commences

Disposal licensing control, import and export control and disposal bans at designated waste disposal facilities of regulated electrical and electronic equipment (REE) (including waste air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors) under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) came into effect today (December 31).

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that starting today, any person who is engaged in the storage, treatment, reprocessing or recycling (but not repair) of waste REE must obtain a waste disposal licence (e-WDL) issued by the EPD under the law unless exempted. A permit issued by the EPD is also required for the import and export of waste REE. In addition, landfills and other designated waste disposal facilities (such as refuse transfer stations) will not receive and handle waste REE.

The spokesman reminded members of the recycling trade that they must comply with the relevant control on waste REE. Under the WDO, any person involved in the disposal (including storage) of waste REE without a licence or the import or export of waste REE without a permit commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment upon first conviction.

According to the WDO, waste disposal licences are not required for the following operations, but must still abide by all other environmental legislation and applicable legislation:

- (1) disposal of waste REE (that is not chemical waste) on land or premises with an area of not more than 100 square metres;
- (2) storage of waste REE with a total volume of not more than 50 cubic metres; and
- (3) storage of waste REE on premises located inside a multi-storey building.

As of December 30, the EPD had issued e-WDLs to eight companies for treating, reprocessing or recycling waste REE, while a further nine applications for e-WDLs and two applications for import/export permits are being processed.

The EPD will closely monitor the operation of licensed waste REE disposal facilities to ensure their compliance with relevant legal requirements and licensing conditions. In addition, EPD staff today paid another round of visits to a number of recycling sites and industrial

building premises to check whether their operations complied with relevant statutory requirements. The spokesman said EPD staff will step up inspections at recycling premises and facilities, and take stringent enforcement actions against non-compliance.

Furthermore, the EPD has earlier conducted joint blitz operations with other relevant government departments at fly-tipping black spots and recycling sites, and no apparent increase in the disposal of waste REE had been observed. The EPD will step up inspections at fly-tipping black spots and recycling sites to combat illegal disposal of waste REE.

The Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) (WPRS) covering REE came into effect on August 1 this year. With the commencement of relevant control measures under the WDO today, locally generated waste REE will be properly treated and recycled, and turned into resources. This will provide a long-term solution to potential land contamination and environmental problems arising from mishandling waste REE during delivery, storage and dismantling processes, marking another important milestone in Hong Kong's waste reduction and recycling efforts. The WEEE·PARK, developed by the Government to underpin the WPRS, began operation in October last year. As of late December, WEEE·PARK has cumulatively processed over 11 700 tonnes of WEEE. In the first five months following the implementation of the WPRS, WEEE·PARK processed 6 900 tonnes of WEEE, ensuring that the locally generated WEEE that would have been otherwise exported for disposal or sent to the landfills is now properly recycled.