

Electrical equipment seller convicted of five charges under Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance

EasyTalk Group Company Limited was convicted and fined \$6,500 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (March 19) on five charges of contravening the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (PERO) when selling a television set. In addition to this case, six other electrical equipment sellers suspected of violating the PERO are scheduled for hearings in March and April.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said a complaint was received in August last year about a customer purchasing a television set from EasyTalk Group Company Limited through the instant messaging application WhatsApp. Staff of the company claimed that the EPD would collect the used television set for recycling in several days. However, the customer was later requested to make the removal arrangements himself after the purchase. During investigation, EPD enforcement officers found that the seller not only did not arrange the statutory removal service for the complainant, but also did not have a removal service plan (RSP) endorsed by the EPD and did not provide recycling labels as well as a receipt containing the prescribed wording according to the Regulation.

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

The spokesman reminded all sellers (including physical stores and those selling through the Internet or phones), that they must not make false statements to consumers or offer them a removal service that is contravening the law with a view to avoiding the relevant liabilities and charging consumers for the removal service. Otherwise, they may contravene the PERO. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$5,000 to \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$10,000 to \$200,000 may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.

The spokesman urged members of the public to make a report to the EPD immediately if they find any seller not conforming to the aforementioned requirements when they purchase electrical and electronic equipment. The EPD will take strict enforcement action against sellers who violate the PERO.