

EPD prosecutes importer for illegal imports of hazardous electronic waste from Thailand (with photos)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted two cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from Thailand at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. The importer concerned, Sheen Bless Limited, was fined \$26,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 12) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

In collaboration with the Customs and Excise Department, the EPD staff intercepted four imported containers from Thailand at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in November and December last year. The containers were claimed to contain liquid crystal panels, but were actually loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising waste flat panel displays (FPDs), with a total market value of about \$290,000. The containers intercepted were immediately returned to the place of origin. The EPD notified the foreign enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments and instigated prosecution against the importer in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that dismantled or destroyed FPDs are hazardous e-waste, containing heavy metals and other toxic substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. To protect the environment, the EPD strictly controls the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste.

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 a valid permit. 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.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

