

EPD responds to media report on illegal operation sites

In response to a media report on the illegal waste disposal sites found by an environmental group, a spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) gave the following response today (November 12):

Before receiving the environmental group's report this August, the EPD has been conducting regular inspections at the concerned site on Long Hon Road in Yuen Long. Inspection records revealed that the site commenced operation this June, as a storage place for second-hand electrical goods and did not involve any dismantling processes or illegal practices. The EPD had not received any public complaints against the site. In fact, storage of second-hand electrical goods is not illegal.

The site mentioned in the media report is a storage place for second-hand electrical goods, mainly providing temporary storage for second-hand electrical goods like refrigerators, washing machines and dehumidifier, for trading. Clear plastic wrap was used for packaging and systematic classification of the stored electrical equipment was found. Since this June, the EPD had conducted over ten inspections at the site concerned, with the recent one carried out on November 9. The department also checked the site's trading receipts which showed normal transaction records, and found that it did not involve any dismantling processes or illegal practices. In a night blitz operation conducted by the EPD, no malpractices was found. The department has informed the site's persons-in-charge that they must obtain the relevant chemical waste or electrical waste disposal license if the site involves dismantling chemical waste or disposing of electrical waste, including dismantling regulated Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

On the other hand, the media report also noted that the environmental group enquired the EPD earlier on the suspected malpractices found in the two recycling sites at Hung Lung Hang in Sheung Shui and Siu Hum Tsuen in Yuen Long. The EPD had replied to the media that the two sites were suspected to have violated the relevant regulations under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the department would consider taking prosecution action. The collection of evidence has now been completed and prosecution action are under way.

The EPD will continue to monitor the sites in the concerned areas, and will take appropriate enforcement actions if violations of environmental laws are found.

The EPD has been committed to combating illegal collection, storage, treatment and import/export of hazardous e-waste. Except under exempted circumstances (such as the storage of e-waste with a total volume of not more than 50 cubic metres), any person who is engaged in the disposal of (including storage, treatment, reprocessing or recycling) regulated e-waste (such as air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, television sets,

computers, printers, scanners and monitors), must obtain a waste disposal licence from the EPD under the WDO. 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 Waste Disposal Licence and Waste Import/Export Permit for e-Waste, please visit the EPD's website:
www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/wdo_e-waste.html.