

[EPD successfully intercepts five cases of illegal import of waste by sea and air \(with photos\)](#)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted five cases of illegal import of waste from the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Thailand at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals (KCCT) and Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). The three importers involved, namely Sun Hui (HK) Limited, Zhuhai Green Technology Co Limited and Xingye Integrity Development Co Limited, were convicted and fined a total of \$110,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts and Eastern Magistrates' Courts on October 8 and today (October 14) respectively for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

An EPD spokesman said, to prevent Hong Kong from becoming a dumping ground for imported waste or a distribution hub for illegal import and export of waste, the department has been closely exchanging intelligence and collaborating with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) on strengthening interception of waste of various types entering Hong Kong illegally through different channels.

With the assistance of the C&ED, the EPD intercepted 18 sea containers and one batch of air cargoes at the KCCT and HKIA respectively during the period from March to April this year. These sea containers and air cargoes were claimed to contain waste plastics, old computer parts and more. After inspection, they were found to be loaded with around 420 tonnes of municipal waste, as well as hazardous waste, namely waste printed circuit boards and waste toner cartridges. The EPD immediately returned all the waste to the places of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments. The department also initiated prosecutions against the three importers involved under the WDO.

The spokesman stressed that imported municipal waste is filthy and unhygienic and has an adverse impact on the environment of Hong Kong. Moreover, municipal waste imported into Hong Kong will eventually be delivered to landfills, taking up the limited space there. In addition, waste printed circuit boards contain various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. Improper disposal of municipal waste and hazardous waste, such as waste toner cartridges, will also cause harm to the environment and public health.

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 obtaining a valid permit beforehand. 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.

