

EPD successfully intercepts four cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste by sea and air (with photos)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted earlier four cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste from the United Kingdom and Germany at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the Kwai Chung Container Terminals (KCCT). The four importers involved, namely E8 Electronics Company Limited, KamShun Telecom HK Limited, Tanda Global Trading Limited and Well Sense Environmental Recycling Limited, were convicted and fined a total of \$122,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts and Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 1) and on May 26 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 the illegal import of waste, the department has been closely exchanging intelligence and collaborating with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) on strengthening the interception of waste of various types entering Hong Kong illegally through different channels.

With the assistance of the C&ED, the EPD intercepted three batches of air cargoes and one sea container at HKIA and the KCCT respectively in November last year. These air cargoes and sea container were claimed to contain telecom equipment, electrical appliances and more. After inspection, they were found to be loaded with hazardous electronic waste, namely waste mobile phone displays, waste tablet displays, waste batteries and waste printed circuit boards, with a total market value of about \$900,000. The EPD immediately returned all the intercepted hazardous electronic waste to the places of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments. The EPD also instituted prosecutions against the four importers involved under the WDO.

The spokesman stressed that waste mobile phone displays, waste tablet displays, waste batteries and waste printed circuit boards are hazardous electronic waste containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are regulated under the existing laws on waste disposal. Improper disposal of such waste will cause harm to the environment and public health. The EPD will continue to rigorously combat the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste and bring offenders to justice to prevent Hong Kong from becoming a distribution hub for illegally imported and exported waste.

The spokesman reminded importers and exporters 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 fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

