

[EPD successfully intercepts illegal import of contaminated aluminium scrap by sea \(with photos\)](#)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) intercepted earlier a case of illegally imported contaminated aluminium scrap from Malaysia at the Kwai Chung Container Terminal. The importer involved, namely Mild On International Limited, was convicted and fined \$15,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (November 2) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

In April 2021, EPD enforcement officers inspected four sea containers, which were claimed to contain aluminium alloy recycling materials. They intercepted about 80 tonnes of contaminated aluminium scrap mixed with waste cables, waste sponge, waste plastics and other waste. The amount of impurities was below the relevant national standards. The EPD immediately repatriated all the contaminated aluminium scrap imported illegally to the place of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipment for their follow-up. The EPD also instituted a prosecution against the importer involved under the WDO.

An EPD spokesman said that the department has been exchanging intelligence with overseas authorities, and worked with the Customs and Excise Department to inspect suspicious containers on a risk-assessment approach, with a view to strictly combating the illegal transboundary movement of controlled waste. In regard to containers holding metal recyclables, if it is found that the metal recyclables do not comply with the relevant requirements (for example, the amount of impurities in aluminium scrap is below the relevant national standards), the EPD will repatriate them to their places of origin and collect evidence about such illegal import activities. The department will also instigate prosecutions against the concerned importers under the WDO if there is sufficient evidence.

The spokesman stressed that the non-recyclable impurities in the aluminium scrap involved will eventually be delivered to landfills for disposal, taking up the limited landfill space in Hong Kong. Improper handling of such contaminated aluminium scrap will also pollute the environment and cause harm to public health.

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 contaminated aluminium scrap or other controlled waste. According to 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 fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The EPD has issued guidelines on the import and export control on metal recyclables for the reference of members of the public and the waste

recycling trade. The guidelines can be downloaded from the EPD's website: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/sites/default/files/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/files/General%20Guidelines%20on%20Import%20and%20Export%20of%20Recyclables_Eng.pdf.

