

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

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted three cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from the United States, Korea and Bangladesh at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. The two importers, namely Chung Wah Hoi Trading Company Limited and Sum Wah Trading (Hong Kong) Limited, as well as a trader involved in these cases, were convicted at Eastern Magistrates' Courts and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on June 3 and 4 and today (June 10) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO). The parties concerned were fined a total of \$63,000.

The EPD has all along been striving to intercept hazardous e-waste entering Hong Kong through different channels. In addition, the department has been proactively strengthening the co-operation and exchange of intelligence with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED). With the assistance of the C&ED, the EPD intercepted two batches of air cargo and a sea container at HKIA and the Kwai Chung Container Terminals respectively from November last year to January this year. The air cargoes and the container were claimed to include liquid crystal display panels, mobile phone motherboards and laptops. After inspection, they were found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste, including waste flat panel displays (FPDs), waste printed circuit boards (PCBs) and waste batteries, with a total market value of about \$700,000. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted hazardous e-waste to the places of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments. The department also instigated prosecutions against the two importers and the trader concerned under the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that waste FPDs, waste PCBs and waste batteries are hazardous e-waste containing 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. The EPD will continue to rigorously combat the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste to protect the environment.

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.

For more information about the control of chemical waste, please visit

the EPD's website:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

