

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

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) intercepted earlier two cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste from the United Kingdom and the United States at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCTs). The two importers involved, namely LCD Waste HK Limited and Mexon Electronics Limited, were convicted and fined a total of \$36,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (November 10) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

An EPD spokesman said that 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 on strengthening the interception of waste of various types entering Hong Kong illegally through different channels at sea, land and air control points for the import and export of cargoes.

During the period from April to May this year, enforcement officers of the EPD inspected an air cargo, which was claimed to contain faulty phone parts, at HKIA and a sea container, which was claimed to contain used mobile phones, notebook computers and tablets, at the KTCTs. They successfully intercepted two batches of illegally imported hazardous electronic waste, including around 22 000 waste mobile phone displays, 600 waste notebook computer displays, 6 600 waste tablet displays and 340 kilograms of waste batteries. The EPD immediately repatriated all the intercepted waste to the place of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipment. The EPD also instituted prosecutions against the two importers involved under the WDO.

The spokesman stressed that waste mobile phone displays, waste notebook computer displays, waste tablet displays and waste batteries are hazardous electronic waste containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are regulated under the WDO. 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 of hazardous waste, bring offenders to justice and 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 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.

