

EPD successfully prosecutes exporter for illegal export of waste

Yee Chung Logistic Company Limited, which illegally exported waste including waste electrical wires, aluminium waste and copper waste from Hong Kong to Malaysia, was convicted and fined \$84,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (November 5) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that, in order to prevent Hong Kong from becoming a distribution hub for illegal import and export of waste, the EPD has been closely exchanging intelligence and collaborating with international law enforcement agencies to combat illegal waste import and export activities. At the end of August, the EPD received a report from the relevant authority in Malaysia on alleged exporting of illegal waste to its country by a Hong Kong exporter. The EPD immediately carried out an investigation and evidence collection, and confirmed that the exporter concerned illegally shipped a total of about 24 tonnes of waste electrical wires, aluminium waste, copper waste and other waste to Malaysia in April without permits issued by the Director of Environmental Protection and written approval from the relevant authority in Malaysia. The EPD then initiated prosecution against the exporter concerned under the WDO.

The spokesman explained that, in accordance with the WDO, the import or export of waste, such as waste paper, waste plastics, waste electrical wires and waste metals (for example, aluminium waste and copper waste), requires a permit issued by the Director of Environmental Protection, unless such waste is uncontaminated and is imported or exported for the purposes of reprocessing, recycling, recovery or reuse. In addition, exporters should obtain prior approvals from the relevant authorities of importing countries for waste recycling. Otherwise, they commit an offence. Improper handling of waste will cause harm to the environment and public health. The EPD will continue to collaborate with international law enforcement agencies to strictly combat illegal waste import and export activities to protect the environment.

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 waste. According to the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to illegally import or export waste. 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.