

EPD successfully prosecutes importer for illegal import of hazardous electronic waste from United States (with photo)

â€‹The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted a case of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from the United States (US) at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. The local importer concerned, Intech Environmental Recycling Limited, was fined \$20,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (August 21) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

With the assistance of the Customs and Excise Department, EPD staff intercepted an imported container from the US at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in April this year. The container was claimed to contain computer parts, but upon inspection it was found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising waste printed circuit boards (PCBs), with a market value of about \$360,000. The intercepted container was immediately returned to the place of origin. The EPD notified the foreign enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipment and instigated prosecution against the importer in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that dismantled or destroyed PCBs are hazardous 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. To protect the environment, the EPD rigorously combats the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste.

The spokesman reminded importers of the waste recycling trade not to 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 unless 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.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

