

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

â€‹Hong Kong Cheng Ron Trading Company, a local importer that illegally imported hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from the United States (US), was convicted and fined \$10,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (December 18) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

With the assistance of the Customs and Excise Department, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff intercepted an imported container from the US at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in June this year. The container was claimed to contain metal scrap, but upon inspection it was found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising waste batteries, with a weight of about 9 tonnes. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted container to its place of origin and notified the relevant local authority to follow up. The department also instigated prosecution against the importer in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that 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.

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.

