

First batch of convictions secured under Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance with four REE sellers fined

Ask Global Computer Limited, Mobile Computer Land Limited, Mr. Computer (H.K.) Limited and Hisense (Hong Kong) Company Limited were fined a total of \$10,000 today (February 1) and in January at Eastern Magistrates' Courts and Fanling Magistrates' Courts for contravening the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (PERO). These are the first four regulated electrical equipment (REE) sellers to be successfully prosecuted by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) for contravening the PERO after relevant clauses of the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment came into effect on August 1 last year. In addition to the above cases, four other sellers suspected of violating the PERO are scheduled for hearing in March.

An EPD spokesman said that enforcement officers conducted an inspection at the Hong Kong Computer and Communications Festival last August and received a report from a customer claiming that Mr. Computer (H.K.) Limited had failed to notify him in writing about the arrangement and terms of the free statutory removal service during his purchase of a printer. Separately, EPD enforcement officers monitored the operations of online sales platforms of REE. It was found that Ask Global Computer Limited, Mobile Computer Land Limited and Hisense (Hong Kong) Company Limited were suspected of charging customers for the statutory removal service and failed to provide information to the EPD for investigation before the deadline without reasonable explanation. The four sellers were prosecuted by the EPD for contravening the PERO.

The spokesman reminded all REE sellers that they must proactively inform consumers about the provision of free statutory removal service by sellers. They should also display written statements and provide details of the removal terms to their consumers. They must also have a removal service plan endorsed by the EPD, arrange for consumers a free removal service to collect the same type of waste equipment, provide a recycling label and a receipt containing the prescribed wording on the recycling levies when distributing REE, and keep a record of each request for removal service for one year. They should also provide information to the EPD as requested to facilitate the department's investigation on suspected non-compliance cases.

The EPD will continue to monitor the compliance situation of REE sellers, including physical shops and online sales platforms, and take stringent enforcement actions against sellers suspected of violating the PERO. Under the PERO, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$5,000 to \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$10,000 to \$200,000 may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions. Any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with a requirement properly made of him by an authorised officer under the PERO, for example to provide requested information for

investigation before a deadline, also commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000.