

First recycling site convicted for illegal disposal of waste REE

A recycling site on Deep Bay Road in Lau Fau Shan operated by Tak Kai Trading Company was convicted and fined \$8,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (October 16) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) as a result of illegally disposing of waste regulated electrical and electronic equipment (REE) without a waste disposal licence (e-WDL). This is the first company successfully prosecuted by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) since the licence control on the disposal of waste REE came into effect on December 31 last year.

An EPD spokesman said that before the implementation of the licence control on the disposal of waste REE, the EPD conducted numerous rounds of inspections of open recycling sites in the New Territories and reminded persons-in-charge of recycling sites about the requirements of the new control and the law enforcement actions to be taken by the department after the control coming into effect. Since the implementation of the control, the EPD has carried out over 900 inspections of open recycling sites in the New Territories, including joint blitz operations carried out in collaboration with other government departments, in order to enhance law enforcement actions against non-compliant operation of recycling sites. During one of the inspections, the EPD detected the above-mentioned recycling site illegally disposing of waste monitors, which are classified as waste electrical and electronic equipment, without an e-WDL, posing risks to the environment and public health. After an investigation and collection of evidence, the EPD prosecuted the company involved under the WDO with a view to maintaining a deterrent effect.

The EPD has yet to discover other cases of non-compliance of the same nature except for one suspected case, which is under investigation. The EPD will continue to monitor recycling sites and will carry out strict law enforcement actions against irregularities.

In accordance with the WDO, any person who is engaged in the storage, treatment, reprocessing or recycling (but not repair) of waste REE (including waste air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors) must obtain the relevant e-WDLs unless exempted. Otherwise, it constitutes an offence. Offenders may be liable to a fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment on first conviction. A fine of \$500,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on a subsequent conviction.