

Importer convicted for second time for importing hazardous electronic waste from Shanghai

A local importer, Goodplace Environmental Protection Limited, illegally imported hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from Shanghai and was fined \$15,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (October 9) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO). The company was also fined \$38,000 for importing hazardous e-waste from Shanghai in June last year.

With the assistance of the Customs and Excise Department, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff intercepted an imported container from Shanghai at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in March this year. The container was claimed to contain electronic parts, but upon inspection it was found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising waste flat panel displays (FPDs). The intercepted container was immediately returned to the place of origin. The EPD also notified the relevant department of the Mainland for follow-up and instigated prosecution against the importer in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that dismantled or destroyed FPDs 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. 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 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.