

Medical institution convicted for repeated illegal transport of clinical waste

Yee Health Company Limited violated the law by failing to hire a licensed clinical waste collector or arrange for healthcare professionals to deliver clinical waste directly to the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre for disposal. The company was convicted and fined \$14,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (July 10) for contravening the Waste Disposal (Clinical Waste) (General) Regulation.

During blitz inspections, staff of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) found that Yee Health Company Limited had illegally transported a total of about 10kg of clinical waste produced from various locations where outreach vaccination activities were held to the company's office in San Po Kong for temporary storage, contravening the requirements of the Regulation. The EPD prosecuted Yee Health Company Limited under the Regulation after investigations and gathering evidence.

A spokesman for the EPD said that the department is very concerned about the illegal transport of clinical waste by individual medical institutions, and would continue to arrange for law-enforcement officers to carry out blitz inspections of different medical institutions and premises where vaccinations are given so as to combat the illegal transport of clinical waste. The spokesman added that some clinical waste, for instance, needles or other sharp instruments, may carry infectious substances. Such objects can easily spread viruses if they are handled improperly during the process of transport. The EPD reminded responsible persons and staff of medical institutions that they must properly arrange for authorised persons to collect, deliver and dispose of clinical waste in accordance with the law to safeguard public health.

According to the Regulation, clinical waste must be delivered by licensed clinical waste collectors or healthcare professionals directly from its place of production to the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre for disposal. Otherwise, it is an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000. The EPD will continue to promote to health workers and medical institutions the methods and importance of properly handling clinical waste through seminars and workshops with the Hospital Authority, the Department of Health, tertiary institutions and medical professional bodies as well as thematic pamphlets and websites. Members of the public and property management offices may report any suspected illegal collection, transport or disposal of clinical waste to the EPD by calling the department's hotline at 2835 1055.