

Recycling sites in North District and Yuen Long in New Territories convicted for illegal collection and handling of hazardous electronic waste

Two recycling sites and a responsible person of another recycling site were convicted for illegal collection, storage and handling of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste), which is classified as chemical waste. They were fined a total of \$92,500 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on May 15 and today (May 29) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) continues to combat illegal handling of hazardous e-waste at recycling sites. EPD staff conducted blitz inspections between last July and October at three open recycling sites in North District, Shan Ha Tsuen and Kung Um Road in Yuen Long in the New Territories. Some 30 bags of waste printed circuit boards (PCBs), which are classified as chemical waste, were found, weighing about 9 tonnes and with a total market value of approximately \$0.9 million. Upon in-depth investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the operating companies and responsible persons of these recycling sites.

The EPD spokesman said, "One of the defendants denied his role as a responsible person of the recycling site. After the court hearing, that defendant was convicted as an on-site responsible person who possesses the chemical waste concerned." The operators and responsible persons of recycling sites should ensure that the collection, storage and handling of chemical wastes at recycling sites comply with the law, otherwise they might be prosecuted, the spokesman added.

The spokesman said that dismantled or destroyed PCBs, LCD monitors and cathode ray tubes are hazardous e-waste, containing heavy metals and other toxic substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. To protect the environment, the EPD is committed to combating the illegal collection, storage and handling of hazardous e-waste by recycling sites, and strictly controls the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste.

The EPD reminded the operators of recycling sites to strictly comply with the relevant controls on chemical waste. They should register with the EPD in accordance with the law if they produce chemical waste. Chemical waste must be properly packaged, labelled and stored, as well as collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for disposal. First-time offenders of the above legislations 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.