

Reports from consumers help EPD make successful prosecutions against three electrical equipment sellers

Three electrical equipment sellers, Pricerite Home Limited, In House Electrical and Sence Market, were prosecuted for contravening the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (PERO) when selling electrical products. They were convicted at Eastern Magistrates' Courts on March 25, at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on March 26 and Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (March 28) respectively and fined a total of \$10,250. In addition to these cases, three other sellers suspected of violating the PERO are scheduled for hearings in April.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said the department received a complaint from a consumer in September last year about Pricerite Home Limited not removing the consumer's old television set by request after the purchase of a television set at the shop. After investigation, the EPD confirmed that the staff of Pricerite Home Limited had not notified the consumer in writing of the terms of their free statutory removal service and had not fulfilled their obligation for arranging the statutory removal service.

In another case, a consumer reported that In House Electrical had not offered a free removal service by request after purchasing a washing machine from the company through WhatsApp. After investigation, the EPD confirmed that the company not only failed to inform the consumer in writing of the terms of its free statutory removal service, but also falsely claimed that arrangement was made with a government recycler for a removal service for free. The EPD also found that In House Electrical had not issued a receipt containing the prescribed wording according to the relevant regulation.

In addition, a consumer reported that Sence Market had failed to provide recycling labels for two new air-conditioners. After investigation, the EPD also confirmed that Sence Market did not have a removal service plan (RSP) endorsed by the EPD when distributing regulated electrical equipment (REE).

The EPD prosecuted these three sellers for contravening a number of requirements under the PERO after investigations and gathering evidence.

The spokesman explained that according to the PERO, which came into effect on August 1 last year, when distributing REE, sellers must have an RSP endorsed by the EPD and proactively notify consumers in writing of the seller's obligation to provide a free statutory removal service as well as the terms of the removal service offered by the company. Moreover, sellers must arrange a free removal service for consumers to dispose of the same type of waste equipment and provide a recycling label as well as a receipt containing the prescribed wording when distributing REE.

The spokesman reminded all sellers (including physical stores and those selling through the Internet or phones), that they must not make false statements to consumers or offer them a removal service that is contravening the law with a view to avoiding the relevant liabilities and charging consumers for the removal service. Otherwise, they may contravene the PER0. 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.

The spokesman urged members of the public to make a report to the EPD immediately if they find any seller not conforming to the aforementioned requirements when they purchase electrical and electronic equipment. The EPD will take strict enforcement action against sellers who violate the PER0.