

Waste collector convicted for second time for collecting waste vehicle batteries without license

An unlicensed waste collector again illegally collected waste vehicle batteries, which are classified as chemical waste. He was convicted at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (July 31) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation and was fined a total of \$17,000. This collector was also convicted in March this year for illegal collection of waste vehicle batteries and fined \$11,000.

During an enforcement operation in January this year, staff of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) intercepted a light goods vehicle at Tung Fat Square in Tai Po and found some 40 waste vehicle batteries in the vehicle. After investigation by the department, it was confirmed that the person involved in the case was not a licensed chemical waste collector and that he had illegally collected waste lead-acid batteries (WLABs) from nearby vehicle repair workshops. After investigation, the EPD prosecuted the collector under the WDO and the Regulation.

The EPD spokesman said that WLABs contain sulphuric acid and lead, while waste lubricating oil contains mineral oil, and these are classified as chemical waste. Improper handling or disposal will pollute the environment and pose risks to public health.

The spokesman reminded those who provide vehicle battery replacement or vehicle repair services that they should register with the EPD as chemical waste producers in accordance with the Regulation, and should hire a licensed chemical waste collector to properly collect and handle WLABs, waste lubricating oil and more. For replacement of vehicle batteries or lubricating oil, vehicle owners should engage the services of registered vehicle repair workshops or companies.

Under the WDO, 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.