

Yuen Long and North District recycling sites and industrial unit in Fo Tan convicted for illegal storage of hazardous electronic waste (with photos)

Three recycling sites in North District and Yuen Long in the New Territories, namely Shengji Industrial Trading Limited, EDM HK Recycling Company Limited and World Trinity International Environmental Limited, as well as Unique Industrial (HK) Limited at Fo Tan Industrial Area, were all involved in illegally storing hazardous electronic waste (e-waste). They were convicted and fined a total of \$74,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts on October 9 and today (October 16) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that EPD enforcement officers conducted a joint blitz operation this March and raided three recycling sites in the New Territories that illegally stored waste printed circuit boards (PCBs) and waste lead-acid batteries (WLABs), which are classified as chemical waste. A large amount of waste PCBs was found illegally stored in open space or scattered inside plastic and paper boxes without lids, and the toxic chemicals and heavy metals they contained may have caused pollution to the nearby environment. A total of over 60 bags of waste PCBs (with a total weight of about 18 tonnes) and 70 WLABs were intercepted during the operation with a total market value of around \$1.8 million.

In addition, during a blitz operation this April, EPD officers found about half a tonne of waste PCBs and waste LCD monitors, which are classified as e-waste, illegally stored in a unit in Goldfield Industrial Centre, Fo Tan, and intercepted dismantled waste electronic products. The company, which claimed to be involved in electronics parts trading, had not registered with the EPD as a chemical waste producer. According to records, the company was convicted and fined \$60,000 by the Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 16, 2016, for contravening the WDO by illegally importing large quantities of hazardous e-waste.

After investigations and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the four companies concerned in accordance with the Regulation.

The spokesman stressed that dismantled or destroyed PCBs, LCD monitors and cathode ray tubes are hazardous e-waste containing heavy metals and other toxic substances, while WLABs contain lead, lead compounds and sulphuric acid, and are classified as chemical waste. If not properly controlled, they will pollute the environment and pose a risk to the health of relevant trade

practitioners and the general public. The EPD has all along been committed to combating the illegal collection, storage, handling and import and export activities of hazardous e-waste. Anyone who violates the above laws shall be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment for the first conviction. 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.

