

Yuen Long recycling site raided by EPD for illegal handling of hazardous electronic waste (with photos)

A recycling site in Yuen Long, which illegally handled hazardous electronic waste (e-waste), was raided during an inter-departmental blitz enforcement operation in January by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). The company concerned, Mei Wah Environmental (Hong Kong) Company Limited, was convicted at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (August 7) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation and was fined a total of \$130,000. This company was also fined \$41,000 in May this year for contravening the WDO and the Regulation.

An EPD spokesman said that a blitz operation was jointly conducted with the Police in January this year at various open recycling sites at Shan Ha Tsuen in Yuen Long. It was found that a recycling site operated by Mei Wah Environmental (Hong Kong) Company Limited illegally stored waste printed circuit boards (PCBs) and LCD monitors, which are classified as chemical waste. About 6 700 waste LCD monitors and five bags of waste PCBs weighing about 1.2 tonnes were found during the operation, with a total market value of approximately \$800,000. Upon investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the operator of the recycling site 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. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. The EPD is 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.

