

EPD successfully intercepts two cases of hazardous waste imported by air (with photo)

G-color Technology Co, Limited, which imported hazardous waste illegally by air from the United States and Austria, was convicted and fined \$20,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (September 9) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that in light of tighter waste import and export controls exerted progressively by nearby countries, the department has been closely exchanging intelligence and collaborating with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), especially on strengthening the interception of hazardous waste entering Hong Kong illegally by air, with a view to preventing Hong Kong from becoming a distribution hub for illegal import and export of waste.

With the assistance of the C&ED, the EPD intercepted two batches of air cargo at Hong Kong International Airport in February this year. After inspection, the two batches of air cargo were found to be loaded with waste ink cartridges, which are hazardous waste, with a total market value of about \$200,000. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted hazardous waste to the places of origin and notified the local enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments. The department also initiated prosecutions against the importer involved under the WDO.

The spokesman stressed that waste ink cartridges are hazardous waste. Improper dismantling or handling of such hazardous waste will cause harm to the environment and public health.

The spokesman reminded importers of the waste recycling trade not to illegally import (including import into or transshipment through Hong Kong) or export hazardous waste. According to the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to import or export hazardous waste without obtaining a valid permit beforehand. 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.

