

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

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted two cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste from Nigeria at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). The two importers involved, namely Success Zone Electronics Limited and Qianhang International Logistics (HK) Co Limited, were convicted at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (August 26) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and fined a total of \$25,000.

A spokesman for the EPD said that in light of the import and export control of electronic waste under the WDO implemented at the end of last year, the department has been closely exchanging intelligence and collaborating with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), especially on strengthening interception of hazardous electronic waste entering Hong Kong illegally by air. With the assistance of the C&ED, the EPD intercepted two batches of air cargoes claimed to contain general goods at HKIA in February and March this year. After inspection, they were found to be loaded with hazardous electronic waste, namely waste printed circuit boards, with a total market value of about \$200,000. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted hazardous electronic waste to the place of origin and notified the local enforcement authority concerned about the return shipments. The department also initiated prosecutions against the two importers under the WDO.

The spokesman stressed that waste printed circuit boards are hazardous electronic waste containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. The EPD will continue to rigorously combat the illegal import and export of hazardous waste, bring offenders to justice and prevent Hong Kong from becoming a distribution hub for illegally imported and exported waste.

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.

For more information about the control of chemical waste, please visit the EPD's website:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

