

Another bean product factory in New Territories convicted of illegally discharging wastewater late at night

A bean product factory named Lam Kee at Tong Kung Leng, Sheung Shui, was convicted and fined \$13,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (August 20) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) by discharging untreated industrial wastewater into Beas River. This is another conviction for contravening the WPCO following the conviction of a company operating a bean product factory at Pat Heung, Yuen Long, last month.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been strictly combating river pollution caused by food factories in the New Territories illegally discharging industrial wastewater. The department received a complaint from a local resident early this year about milky pollutants being discharged into Tam Shui Hang, a tributary of Beas River. After investigating and identifying Lam Kee as the source of the pollution, enforcement officers of the EPD conducted a midnight ambush operation in February and successfully detected the factory illegally discharging turbid untreated wastewater into a river nearby. Test results of water samples collected at the scene by enforcement officers of the EPD showed that the concentration of suspended solids and biological oxygen demand exceeded the relevant statutory discharge standards by three times and 38 times respectively. This seriously affected the water quality and ecology of the river. The EPD subsequently prosecuted the factory involved in accordance with the WPCO.

A spokesman for the EPD reminded members of the trade that they must equip their factories with wastewater treatment facilities that are up to standard and ensure the effective operation of such facilities to properly treat industrial wastewater. Members of the trade should not illegally discharge wastewater and pollute the environment. Under the WPCO, anyone discharging wastewater into Hong Kong waters commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment on first conviction. A maximum fine of \$400,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on a second or subsequent conviction.