

Asphalt plants in Tuen Mun convicted of violating Air Pollution Control Ordinance

Two asphalt plants in Lung Kwu Sheung Tan, Tuen Mun, under the companies Hong Kong Asphalt (Green) Limited and Road Asphalt Limited respectively, were convicted of violating the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) today (December 24) at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts for failing to properly operate their dust-filtering equipment and storing aggregates, thus causing air pollution. The two companies were respectively fined \$9,000 and \$10,000. In addition, a director of Hong Kong Asphalt (Green) Limited was also prosecuted for violating the APCO, and was ordered to pay bail of \$5,000 on his own recognisance and bound over for 24 months by the court.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD), during a routine inspection in April, found that a large amount of fine dust was being discharged from the asphalt plant under Hong Kong Asphalt (Green) Limited, causing air pollution. After investigation, EPD officers found that the plant did not properly operate its dust-filtering equipment, thus causing a large amount of fine dust to disperse from its filters and breaching the requirements stipulated in the Specified Process Licence. Records showed that the asphalt plant had been convicted repeatedly for such violations and its director was also suspected of management negligence or omission, having failed to ensure that the plant was operating in compliance with the licence requirements. Meanwhile, when investigating another complaint in June, the EPD found that an asphalt plant of Road Asphalt Limited located at Lung Kwu Sheung Tan had stockpiled aggregates in an open area, causing dust emission and contravening requirements of the Specified Process Licence. After collecting evidence, the EPD prosecuted the two asphalt plants and a director concerned in accordance with the APCO.

Under the APCO, asphalt works are classified as specified processes, which must be licensed by the EPD and should be carried out strictly in accordance with the terms stipulated in the licence. If licence holders fail to observe licence conditions, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000. Upon second or subsequent conviction, a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed. Negligent operators shall also be held personally liable upon conviction in court.