

Cement plant of China Concrete Company Limited in Sha Ling convicted for dispersing fine dust

A cement plant of China Concrete Company Limited located in Sha Ling did not properly cover the materials for making concrete, resulting in the dispersion of a large amount of fine dust which caused air pollution. The company was convicted and fined \$8,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (September 4) for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO).

Environmental Protection Department (EPD) officers conducted an inspection this March at the cement plant concerned. It was suspected that the plant illegally stacked up a pile of aggregates and sand at the open space inside the plant, which violated the requirements stipulated in the specified process Licence. The licence stated that aggregates should be properly stored and provided with appropriate cover. The pile of materials, covering an area of about 13 metres by 3m, generated a large amount of fine dust and caused air pollution in the surrounding environment. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the cement plant in accordance with the APCO.

Cement handling plants are classified as specified processes under the APCO. They are required to obtain a licence from the EPD and should comply with relevant dust control requirements. Aggregates should be stored in the structure, with the top sheltered and its three sides enclosed with rigid walls, and its entrance should be covered with a dust curtain and have water spraying installed, so as to prevent the fine dust from dispersing by wind. 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.