

Director of vegetable chain stalls in Yuen Long convicted for causing noise annoyance (with photos)

Two vegetable stalls operated by Bonnie Vegetables and Fruit Wholesale Limited at Yuen Long New Street and Hop Choi Street were fined a total of \$17,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 5) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO) by causing persistent noise annoyance with loudspeakers playing promotional recordings placed at their front doors. The director, who operates the vegetable chain stalls, was also convicted and held criminally liable for her stores' repeated offences. She was fined \$3,000.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that since last year, the department received many complaints from members of the public about vegetable stalls in the vicinity of Yuen Long New Street and Hop Choi Street persistently playing promotional recordings by using loudspeakers, which adversely affected nearby residents. The EPD conducted numerous joint enforcement operations with the Police and raided the above vegetable stalls in last December and January this year. It was found that their loudspeakers were generating excessive noise and caused annoyance and the EPD subsequently prosecuted the stalls concerned under the NCO. The above vegetable stalls were operated by the same director. One of her stalls has already been convicted twice under the NCO since September last year, and the EPD thus prosecuted the registered director of the vegetable chain stalls.

After a series of enforcement actions, the situation of the aforementioned vegetable stalls improved. The EPD will continue to closely monitor and conduct stringent enforcement actions to combat repeated contraventions by stalls, and prosecute the operator of the stalls concerned.

The spokesman reminded persons responsible for retail shops and market stalls that when they play promotional recordings to sell goods, they should contain the noise level within their shop area and should not cause annoyance to other people outside their shops or nearby residents. Otherwise, it constitutes an offence, and offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000. For stores with repeated contraventions, the operator himself will also be criminally liable for the offence once convicted.

