

EPD conducts two successful prosecutions against illegal removal of asbestos roofs (with photo)

A works contractor and a property owner illegally removed the asbestos roofs of a squatter house in Fanling and a residential flat in Tai Po by themselves. They were convicted today (November 13) at Fanling Magistrates' Courts for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) and were fined a total of \$9,000.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that there were reports from members of the public in May about the illegal removal of asbestos roofs of a squatter house at Hung Leng Tsuen in Fanling and a residential flat at Dragon Court in Tai Po. Upon investigation, it was confirmed that the EPD had not been notified prior to the commencement of these asbestos removal works and no registered asbestos contractors were hired for the works as stipulated by the law. After evidence collection, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the non-registered works contractor and the property owner under the APCO.

The spokesman said that to safeguard public health, asbestos abatement works at squatter structures or residential buildings must be carried out by a registered asbestos contractor in accordance with the statutory requirements and the code of practice on asbestos control to prevent the release of asbestos fibres from affecting the workers and public health. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. Anyone failing to give not less than 28 days' written notice to the EPD prior to the commencement of such works is also liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000.

The spokesman urged members of the public who witness any illegal asbestos abatement work to report it to the department. They can call the EPD departmental hotline at 2838 3111 to help combat such illegal practices.

