

EPD makes three successful prosecutions against illegal removal of asbestos roofs

Diamond Light Construction & Metal Works Co, Kai Cheung Engineering and Yih Ding Investment Company Limited illegally carried out demolition of asbestos building structures or hired non-registered contractor to carry out removal works. They were convicted from Monday (October 8) to today (October 11) at Eastern Magistrates' Courts, Fanling Magistrates' Courts and Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts respectively for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) and were fined a total of \$38,000.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that complaints were received from members of the public from March to May this year about the illegal demolition of asbestos building structures at the back alley of a ground floor shop at Po Shing Mansion in Tsuen Wan; a ground floor shop at Tsui Yuen Mansion at Waterloo Road in Mong Kok; and a village house at Ho King Terrace in Peng Chau. The EPD conducted investigations and found that the asbestos removal works at all three locations were not carried out in accordance with the statutory requirements, as no registered asbestos contractors were hired to conduct the removal works and the EPD had not been notified prior to the commencement of the works. After evidence collection, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the contractors and the property owners under the APCO.

The spokesman said that to safeguard public health, asbestos abatement works at commercial and industrial buildings 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 of the commencement date of the asbestos abatement work is also liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000.

The spokesman urged members of the public to report to the department if they witness any illegal asbestos abatement works. They can call the EPD departmental hotline at 2838 3111 to help combat illegal behaviour.