

EPD refuses concrete batching plant's licence renewal application

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (April 29) issued a notice to refuse an application for renewal of a Specified Process Licence (SPL) for a concrete batching plant (CBP) at No. 22 Tung Yuen Street, Yau Tong.

A spokesman for the EPD said that the department has all along been concerned about the operation of the CBPs in Yau Tong, and has continuously stepped up inspections to monitor whether the CBPs strictly comply with the terms of the SPL and adopt the best practicable measures to avoid causing an environmental nuisance to nearby residents.

In the previous inspections, EPD enforcement officers repeatedly found malpractices of the concerned CBP. Apart from multiple offers of advice and warnings given to the plant, prosecutions were instituted against the plant for one and two cases of violations of the licence terms in 2018 and 2020 respectively, of which the plant was convicted. In 2021 so far, the EPD found that the plant has continued to be involved in several cases of suspected violations of licence terms. The department is further collecting and compiling evidence with a view to initiating prosecution.

The spokesman explained that the previous environmental performance of the CBP was unsatisfactory. The plant has not submitted adequate information for the application to demonstrate that it possesses the capability to provide, install and effectively operate the necessary practicable measures for preventing pollutant emissions and nuisance caused to the nearby residents, and has hence failed to comply with the requirements for licence renewal under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO). The department thereby refused the application for renewal of the SPL for the plant.

According to the APCO, the plant concerned can appeal to the Appeal Board within 21 days of receiving the department's notification of refusing its licence renewal application, or the plant must cease operation upon expiry of the appeal period.

The spokesman stressed that the EPD will continue to step up inspections of the other concrete batching plants' operations in Yau Tong and will take stringent enforcement actions. In handling applications of SPL renewals for these CBPs in the future, the department will strictly follow the above-mentioned principles under the APCO in deciding whether to renew their SPL to safeguard the living environment of the nearby residents.