

Food factory in Tuen Mun convicted again for discharging substandard wastewater

A food factory under Vitasoy International Holdings Limited in Tuen Mun discharged substandard industrial wastewater again and violated the requirements of the wastewater discharge licence. The company was fined \$12,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (April 13) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO).

Environmental Protection Department (EPD) enforcement officers conducted a blitz inspection at the aforementioned factory in October last year and collected wastewater samples for analysis. The results showed that the concentration of five-day biochemical oxygen demand in the wastewater exceeded the upper limit as stated in the wastewater discharge licence. The department then prosecuted the company in accordance with the WPCO. The company was fined \$10,000 by the court for committing the same offence in April 2019 according to department records. The wastewater treatment system of the company had been enhanced afterwards. After detecting the discharge of substandard industrial wastewater again, the EPD met with the management of the company and reminded them to always maintain the proper operation of the wastewater treatment system and to strictly adhere to the discharge standards as stipulated in the licence.

A spokesperson for the EPD reminded all wastewater discharge licensees that they should arrange regular cleaning and maintenance of the wastewater treatment facilities and collect wastewater samples regularly for analysis in accordance with the requirements of the licence to ensure the facilities maintain proper operation and comply with the requirements of the licence as well as preventing substandard wastewater from flowing into the sewers.

Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges commercial or industrial wastewater into communal sewers not in compliance with the standard of the discharge licence commits an offence. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$400,000 and six months' imprisonment.