

Garage owner in Tai Kok Tsui convicted and fined for illegal handling of spent lubricating oil classified as chemical waste

The owner of Australia Motor Service at Li Tak Street in Tai Kok Tsui illegally handled spent lubricating oil and was fined \$19,000 by Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (November 8) for contravening the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted a blitz inspection in May. It was found that after replacing lubricating oil for its customers, the vehicle maintenance workshop concerned arbitrarily placed the spent lubricating oil, which is classified as chemical waste, inside the garage. The spent lubricating oil was not properly labelled or stored in a leakproof device. After the EPD's investigation, it was confirmed that the owner of the vehicle maintenance workshop did not register with the department as a chemical waste producer. After evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the owner concerned for contravening the Regulation.

An EPD spokesman explained that spent lubricating oil generated by vehicle maintenance workshops is classified as chemical waste and contains various toxic chemicals. Improper handling of such waste will cause the spent lubricating oil to leak into nearby drains and soil, which pollutes the environment and causes harm to public health.

The spokesman reminded all garage operators and workers engaged in the vehicle repair business that they should register as chemical waste producers with the EPD in accordance with the above Regulation. Chemical waste must be properly packaged, labelled and stored, and has to be collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for treatment. In addition, for replacement of lubricating oil or batteries, vehicle owners should engage the services of vehicle repair garages or companies that have registered with the EPD.

Under the Regulation, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.