

Hong Kong School of Motoring convicted again of discharging substandard wastewater

The Hong Kong School of Motoring's branch in Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin, has discharged improperly treated wastewater into the Shing Mun River again, breaching the conditions of a wastewater discharge licence. The company was convicted and fined \$15,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (September 24) for contravening the Water Pollution Control (General) Regulations. The company was convicted and fined a total of \$21,000 for the same offence in February last year and February this year.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been endeavouring to combat the problem of substandard commercial and industrial wastewater polluting Shing Mun River. EPD enforcement officers conducted a targeted inspection of the Hong Kong School of Motoring's branch in Siu Lek Yuen in March this year. It was found that turbid wastewater with a foul odour was being discharged from the branch into the Shing Mun River via a public storm drain, adversely affecting the water quality of the Shing Mun River. The officers collected samples of the wastewater discharged for tests. Test results showed that the concentration of chemical oxygen demand and ammonia-nitrogen in the samples exceeded the relevant statutory discharge limits by 1.75 times and 2.1 times respectively. After collecting evidence, the EPD prosecuted the wastewater discharge licensee concerned, the Hong Kong School of Motoring Limited, under the Water Pollution Control (General) Regulations. The EPD has already reminded the company directors concerned about the relevant legal liabilities and will proactively liaise with the company's management on a solution to improve their wastewater treatment facilities with a view to preventing the branch from discharging substandard wastewater.

An EPD spokesman reminded all wastewater discharge licensees, including occupants of premises and business operating companies, that they must ensure the effective operation of their wastewater treatment facilities and strictly comply with the conditions of a wastewater discharge licence with a view to protecting water bodies.

Under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance, anyone discharging commercial and industrial wastewater that is non-compliant with the conditions of a wastewater discharge licence into communal sewers commits an offence. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.