

Hong Kong School of Motoring in Siu Lek Yuen convicted again for discharging substandard wastewater

The Hong Kong School of Motoring Shatin Road Safety Centre in Siu Lek Yuen was again caught illegally discharging substandard wastewater into the Shing Mun River. It was convicted and fined \$13,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (February 19) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO). The company committed the same offence and was convicted and fined \$8,000 in February last year.

Environmental Protection Department (EPD) enforcement officers conducted an inspection at Shatin Road Safety Centre last August. It was found again that the wastewater treatment facilities of the centre did not operate properly and brownish turbid wastewater with foul odour was discharged unceasingly. The wastewater washed down into the Shing Mun River via the communal storm drains and polluted the water quality of the river. A wastewater sample was collected by the EPD for analysis and the result showed that the concentration of suspended solids, chemical oxygen demand and biological oxygen demand exceeded the upper limits of the wastewater discharge licence by two times. The EPD again prosecuted the licensee, the Hong Kong School of Motoring, in accordance with the WPCO.

The EPD has all along been committed to protecting the water quality of the Shing Mun River. Inspections and water quality monitoring are conducted regularly in order to detect the pollution source as soon as possible and stop wastewater from entering the river. An EPD spokesman reminded all licensees concerned, including occupants of premises and property management companies, that they should ensure proper operation of their wastewater treatment facilities and strictly comply with the discharge standards as stipulated in the licence to protect water bodies.

According to the WPCO, anyone who discharges wastewater which exceeds the limits of the discharge licence into the communal drainage system commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. A maximum fine of \$400,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.