

Illegal discharge of muddy water exposed by EPD's smart surveillance system (with photos)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) detected a case of illegal discharge of muddy water from a construction site in the Southern District of Hong Kong Island through its smart surveillance system. The contractor involved, Wing Sum Construction & Engineering Co, Limited, was convicted for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) by discharging not properly treated wastewater into a stormwater drain near a construction site, and was fined \$15,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (November 14).

To step up efforts to combat illegal discharge of wastewater, the EPD installed round-the-clock smart surveillance systems at various locations in Wong Chuk Hang Nullah from the beginning of this year. The smart system will notify enforcement officers immediately once an unusual discharge is found. In addition, the EPD continues to monitor the situation of the public drainage system of Wong Chuk Hang area with such a system, and makes use of the data collected to formulate action plans to combat illegal discharge of wastewater.

Through the smart surveillance system installed, EPD officers found in April this year, a construction site on Wong Chuk Hang Road that was suspected of discharging muddy water into nearby road gullies frequently, causing pollution. Upon a subsequent blitz inspection and evidence collection, the department confirmed that the construction site discharged improperly treated wastewater into a stormwater drain, and instituted prosecution in accordance with the WPCO against the contractor of the construction site.

A spokesman for the EPD pointed out that construction site contractors must install suitable wastewater treatment facilities and ensure their effective operation in order to collect and properly treat wastewater generated from construction sites and avoid pollution of downstream river channels or the coast. Under the WPCO, it is an offence for any person to discharge polluted water into the waters of water control zones. First-time 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 subsequent convictions.

A spokesman for the EPD said that the EPD will continue to adopt smart technologies to step up enforcement actions and combat illegal discharge of wastewater by construction sites.

