

Importer of paint convicted and fined for importing paint with excessive volatile organic compounds

A & A Building Materials Supplier, a paint importer, was convicted and fined a total of \$14,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 25) for contravening the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation by importing two types of architectural paint with excessive volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from Italy and the Mainland.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said the importer involved imported 360 litres of Industria Chimica General Stone Color (Black) from Italy last July and 36 litres of Italcina Proof 10S Plus Impregnator from the Mainland last September. Analysis of the samples collected by the EPD confirmed that the VOC content in these two products exceeded the legal limit by 2.4 times and 1.8 times respectively. The EPD subsequently prosecuted the responsible person of the importer, A & A Building Materials Supplier, according to the Regulation.

The spokesman said VOCs are a major component responsible for the formation of smog, resulting in regional air pollution and smog problems. Some of the VOCs are poisonous and would cause harm to public health. Starting from April 1, 2007, the Government gradually put under regulatory control the import and local manufacture of products containing VOCs, including architectural paint, printing inks, vehicle refinishing paint, vessel and pleasure craft paint, adhesives and sealants, as well as a series of consumer products. The EPD will continue to combat regulated products with VOC content exceeding the legal limits with a view to further improving the air quality of Hong Kong and the neighbouring regions.

The spokesman reminded all importers and local manufacturers of paint to ensure the VOC levels of the regulated products are in compliance with the legal limits before importing or manufacturing them in order to avoid contravening the law. In addition, construction works contractors should use VOC-compliant paints to protect the health of the workers at their construction sites and the environment.

In accordance with the Regulation, anyone who imports into or manufactures in Hong Kong regulated products with VOCs exceeding the legal limits commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.

For more information about VOC control, please visit the EPD's website: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/prob_solutions/voc_reg.html.