

Japan Home Centre convicted and fined for importing non-compliant multi-purpose lubricant

Japan Home Centre (HK) Limited (Japan Home Centre) imported a batch of multi-purpose lubricant from Singapore, in which an excessive volatile organic compound (VOC) content was detected. The company was convicted and fined \$10,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (October 22) for contravening the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said, in March this year, the EDP collected samples of a multi-purpose lubricant from a Japan Home Centre shop for analysis, and the result showed that the samples' VOC content exceeded the legal limit by 13 per cent (by weight). After investigation, the EPD found that Japan Home Centre imported around 10 000 bottles (100 millilitres per bottle) of multi-purpose lubricant in one batch from Singapore in February this year for sale in its shops. The EPD then prosecuted Japan Home Centre under the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation. Subsequently, Japan Home Centre stopped the sale of this batch of non-compliant products.

The spokesman reminded all importers and local manufacturers that, before importing or manufacturing any products regulated by the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation, they must check their product information in detail. In addition, they must ensure that the relevant product's VOC content is compliant with the legal limit with a view to not contravening the law.

The spokesman explained that VOCs are a major component responsible for the formation of smog, resulting in regional air pollution and smog problems. Starting from April 1, 2007, the Government has gradually put under regulatory control the import and local manufacture of products containing VOCs, including architectural paint, printing products, vehicle refinishing paint, vessel and pleasure craft paint, adhesives and sealants as well as a series of consumer products, including multi-purpose lubricant. The EPD will continue to combat the illegal import or manufacture of regulated products with excessive VOCs with a view to further improving the air quality of Hong Kong and the neighbouring regions.

In accordance with the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation, anyone who imports into or manufactures in Hong Kong regulated products with a VOC content exceeding the legal limit for sale or use locally commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.

For more information about the regulation on VOCs, please visit the EPD's website:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/prob_solutions/voc_reg.html.