

Metal processing factory at Yuen Long Industrial Estate convicted for discharging substandard wastewater

The factory of Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited at Yuen Long Industrial Estate directly discharged substandard wastewater into a communal sewer. It was fined \$15,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 26) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO).

Having received a complaint last December about illegal discharge by the factory, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff conducted a night-time blitz inspection at the hot-dip zinc factory and found that the factory did not deliver wastewater to its sewage treatment facility for proper treatment. Instead, the industrial wastewater was being directly discharged into the communal sewer. The EPD staff then collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentrations of iron and zinc were 5 200 milligrams/litre and 4 400mg/L respectively, which exceeded the upper limits of the WPCO licence by 207 and 879 times. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the company.

An EPD spokesman said that members of the industry should properly collect and treat industrial wastewater to ensure that the effluent discharge meets the standards as set out in the WPCO licence before being discharged into communal sewers. Discharging industrial wastewater with high heavy metal concentration will affect the operation of the Government's sewage treatment works. Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges commercial or industrial wastewater which exceeds the standard of the discharge licence into communal sewers commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.