

Non-registered contractor and property owner convicted for illegal demolition of asbestos roofs

A non-registered contractor for a village house at Tai Yuen Tsuen in Sheung Shui Wai and a property owner of Po Lun House at Portland Street in Mong Kok, who illegally removed asbestos roofs, were convicted today (May 29) at Fanling Magistrates' Courts and on May 24 at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts respectively, for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO). These two cases were fined a total of \$34,000.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that complaints were received last November and December about the illegal demolition of asbestos sheeting at a village house at Tai Yuen Tsuen in Sheung Shui Wai and a residential flat at Po Lun House at Portland Street in Mong Kok respectively. The EPD conducted investigations and found that the asbestos removal works at both locations were not carried out in accordance with the statutory requirements, as no registered asbestos contractors were hired to conduct the removal works and the EPD had not been notified prior to the commencement of the works. After evidence collection, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the contractor and the property owner under the APCO.

The spokesman said that, to safeguard public health, asbestos abatement works at village houses or residential buildings must be carried out by a registered asbestos contractor in accordance with the statutory requirements and the code of practice on asbestos control to prevent the release of asbestos fibres from affecting the workers and public health. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. Anyone failing to give not less than 28 days' written notice to the EPD of the commencement date of the asbestos abatement work is also liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000.