

Sun Fat Heung Food Product Limited at Pat Heung, Yuen Long convicted of illegally discharging wastewater into river twice (with photo)

The bean product factory of Sun Fat Heung Food Product Limited located at Pat Heung, Yuen Long discharged untreated industrial wastewater into a river twice at the end of last year. The company was fined a total of \$40,000 by the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (July 2) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO).

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) received a complaint in October last year that wastewater containing remnants of tofu was being discharged into Kam Tin River, causing environmental pollution. The EPD enforcement officers then conducted an ambush operation in November last year and successfully detected that Sun Fat Heung Food Product Limited's bean product factory at Pat Heung, Yuen Long, was discharging untreated industrial wastewater into an adjacent river at midnight, seriously polluting nearby waters. Despite the fact that the EPD enforcement officers told the person-in-charge of the factory the department might consider initiating a prosecution for the above offence and warned them not to discharge substandard wastewater, the person-in-charge ignored the warning from the EPD. The factory was again found illegally discharging turbid wastewater by EPD enforcement officers during another ambush operation in early December last year.

After evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecutions against Sun Fat Heung Food Product Limited for the aforementioned incidents of discharging wastewater under the WPCO.

A spokesman for the EPD said that any direct discharge of untreated industrial wastewater would pollute nearby waterways and adversely affect public hygiene. The spokesman reminded members of the trade that they must install wastewater treatment facilities that are up to standard and ensure the effective operation of the facilities to treat wastewater with a view to avoiding environmental pollution.

Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges wastewater into Hong Kong waters commits an offence. 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 second or subsequent convictions.

