

Three companies operating waste plastic recycling yards in New Territories convicted of causing air pollution

Tai Wo Recycle Resources (HK) Limited in North District and CP Leader Environmental Technology Limited as well as Eastone Investment Limited in Yuen Long did not comply with the relevant requirement of air pollution abatement notices to reduce odour emissions from the production of plastic pellets by a deadline. The three companies were convicted and fined a total of \$22,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (May 26) and on May 19 and 5 respectively for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO).

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been greatly concerned about the pollution caused by open-air waste plastic recycling yards in the New Territories recently. The department has conducted targeted operations and stepped up law enforcement actions to combat non-compliance. During a series of operations carried out by enforcement officers of the EPD from the latter half of last year until now, air pollution abatement notices have been issued to 18 recycling yards, requesting them to reduce odour emissions from the production of plastic pellets by a deadline. After the expiry of the deadline, enforcement officers of the EPD discovered that eight of the recycling yards, including the three companies mentioned above, did not improve on their non-compliant situations and continued to cause odour nuisance, which allegedly contravened the APCO. The EPD then took follow-up action against the recycling yards. In addition to the three convicted companies, the remaining five cases are either under investigation by the EPD or being scheduled for hearings in the courts.

A spokesman for the EPD reminded operators of waste plastic recycling yards that they must properly service and maintain their waste plastic management facilities with a view to ensuring their effective operation. They should equip their recycling yards with suitable and effective air pollution control equipment, for instance adopting fully enclosed production lines and installing effective ventilation as well as air purifying systems for their production lines to reduce air pollutant emission. In addition, operators of waste plastic recycling yards should arrange for experienced technicians to carry out regular inspections and maintenance so as to avoid causing air pollution nuisance to residents nearby. The EPD will continue to closely monitor the performance of waste plastic recycling yards in terms of environmental protection and strictly combat illegal activities.

According to the APCO, anyone failing to comply with any requirement of an air pollution abatement notice commits an offence. Offenders may be liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 on a first conviction. A maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on a subsequent conviction.