

## Three offenders fined for illegal removal of asbestos

A person-in-charge of works and two residential unit owners were respectively convicted at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (December 19) and at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 12 and December 10 for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) by illegally demolishing asbestos-containing materials. They were fined a total of \$16,000.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that the department conducted follow-up inspections after receiving reports from members of the public in May and June this year that corrugated asbestos cement sheet (CACS) roofing was being illegally dismantled at premises at Kwai Fat Building in Kwai Chung, Sun On Building in Sham Shui Po and Mei Kei Mansion in Cheung Sha Wan. After investigation, the EPD gathered evidence showing that in each of the three cases, written notice had not been given to the department at least 28 days in advance of the commencement of the works in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. In one of the cases, no registered asbestos contractor was hired to carry out demolition of CACS roofing. The EPD therefore initiated prosecutions against the person-in-charge of the works and the residential unit owners in accordance with the APCO.

The spokesman reminded persons-in-charge of works and residential property owners that if their renovation and refurbishment works at buildings involve demolition of asbestos-containing materials, they must hire registered asbestos contractors to carry out the works in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and the code of practice on asbestos control to avoid the release of asbestos fibres and to protect the health of members of the public and the workers concerned in the projects. Offenders will be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. Meanwhile, contractors who carry out works involving asbestos must give not less than 28 days' written notice to the EPD prior to the commencement of such works. Otherwise, they will be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000.

Members of the public can help combat illegal activities and safeguard public health by calling the EPD departmental hotline at 2838 3111 to make a report if they witness any illegal works involving asbestos.