

Three restaurants in Western District and Wan Chai fined for illegally emitting excessive cooking fumes

Three restaurants, namely 11 Westside on Davis Street in Kennedy Town, Why Noodle at Ying Wa Terrace in Sai Ying Pun and Sing Kee Seafood Restaurant on Luard Road in Wan Chai, violated the requirements of the statutory notices issued by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) by failing to reduce excessive cooking fume emissions. The restaurants were convicted on April 1 and 8 and today (April 15) respectively at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and fined a total of \$27,000 for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO).

During inspections targeting air pollution and nuisance caused by cooking fumes emitted by restaurants, EPD officers found that the three restaurants failed to appropriately install or repair cooking fume control equipment, emitting excessive cooking fumes and causing nuisance to residents nearby. The EPD then issued statutory notices under the APCO requiring the restaurants to install and repair cooking fume control equipment by a deadline with a view to reducing cooking fume emissions. Subsequently, the three restaurants were prosecuted by the EPD as they failed to complete installations of and repairs to cooking fume control equipment by the deadline, which contravened the requirements of the notices.

According to the APCO, it is an offence if restaurant operators do not comply with the requirements of a statutory notice and do not adopt effective remedial measures to abate excessive cooking fume emissions within a specified time limit. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.

An EPD spokesman reminded members of the food business that they should properly design and install effective air pollution control equipment such as electrostatic precipitators in the kitchens of food premises before their restaurants start operation so as to avoid emitting excessive cooking fumes and being prosecuted by the EPD, as well as prevent technical difficulties and additional costs for installing the equipment after the opening of the restaurants. In addition, restaurant operators have the obligation to arrange for experienced technicians to clean, check and repair their air pollution control equipment regularly with a view to ensuring that no excessive fumes or odours would be emitted, causing nuisance to residents nearby.

The EPD has drawn up guidelines (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/sites/default/files/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/files/pamphlet_oilfume_eng.pdf) to enlighten members of the industry about the requirements for restaurants and help improve their performance in terms of environmental protection. These guidelines also help members of the industry to know more and use appropriate air pollution control equipment

with a view to controlling and reducing cooking fume emissions. In addition, the department has provided members of the industry with up-to-date information about environmental protection through talks of various kinds.