

Two chain stores in Tai Po and their directors convicted of causing noise nuisance by playing promotional recordings

Queens Agriculture Development Trading Int'l Limited, which operates a chain of vegetable stalls, and Famous Team Trading Limited, which operates a chain of meat stalls, were prosecuted because their branches at Tai Kwong Lane in Tai Po caused a noise annoyance to nearby residents by playing persistently and loudly promotional recordings again. The two companies were convicted and fined a total of \$41,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (February 2) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO). Their directors also held criminal liability and were fined a total of \$7,000 for contravening the NCO repeatedly.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that the department has been strictly combating noise annoyances caused by broadcasting from shops in various districts. In addition to stepping up routine inspections and strengthening enforcement against shops with repeated contraventions, the department also collaborated with relevant departments, including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Police, to take joint enforcement actions. Insofar as Tai Po District is concerned, 38 shopfront noise cases have been convicted by the courts for contravening the NCO since 2018, with fines of over \$200,000 in total. Apart from prosecuting the operating companies of the shops, the EPD will also prosecute their directors in accordance with the law with a view to stiffening penalties and strengthening the deterrent effect.

The spokesman reminded persons responsible for retail stores and market stalls that the department will continue to conduct enforcement actions. When the shops play promotional recordings to attract customers, they must contain the volume within their store area as far as possible and should not cause a noise nuisance to people outside their stores, or for nearby residents. Otherwise, it constitutes an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000. As for the operators or directors of shops with repeated contraventions, they will also be criminally liable for the offence once convicted.