

Two restaurants in Yuen Long convicted for illegal wastewater discharge into communal storm drain

Two restaurants in Yuen Long, namely Block 18 Doggie's Noodle on Kin Yip Street and Forgetmenot Sweet Heart on Fung Kam Street, illegally discharged wastewater into a communal storm drain. They were fined a total of \$16,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (May 18) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO).

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) mounted an operation against illegal discharge of wastewater by restaurants in Yuen Long last October and revealed that the restaurants concerned discharged substandard wastewater into an open nullah. EPD staff took wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentration of oil and grease exceeded the statutory standard by 25 times and 10 times respectively. The department subsequently initiated prosecution against the operating companies of the restaurants in accordance with the WPCO.

An EPD spokesman said that the department has been very concerned about the illegal discharge of wastewater into Yuen Long Nullah, which polluted the downstream water quality and caused an odour nuisance to the residents. EPD staff have conducted investigations frequently on suspected polluting sources to prevent illegal discharges of wastewater, with a view to improving the water quality of the nullah.

The spokesman reminded all restaurant operators that they must install and use appropriate wastewater treatment facilities, such as grease traps, to remove the oil and grease from wastewater. They should also clean those facilities regularly and maintain their effective operation, and avoid wastewater from discharging into the river channel or the sea via the communal storm drainage system and pollute the environment. Under the WPCO, it is an offence for anyone to discharge wastewater into the communal drainage system. 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.