

Unlicensed collector and person-in-charge of open-air storage site convicted of illegally handling spent lubricating oil (with photo)

An unlicensed collector and a person-in-charge of an open-air storage site were convicted and fined a total of \$13,500 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (January 4) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation (CWR) respectively by illegally collecting and handling spent lubricating oil. The Court also ordered the confiscation of the 111 drums of spent lubricating oil seized in the case.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has been endeavouring to combat illegal collection and handling of spent lubricating oil. Last June, enforcement officers of the EPD carried out operations according to intelligence received, and successfully tracked and intercepted a truck driver who was illegally collecting and transporting spent lubricating oil to an open-air storage area in Yuen Long. A total of 111 drums of spent lubricating oil, approximately 20 000 litres in capacity, were seized. After gathering evidence, the EPD initiated prosecutions in accordance with the WDO and the CWR. The truck driver, serving as an unlicensed waste collector, was charged with collecting chemical waste without a licence and failing to transport chemical waste to licensed disposal facilities for treatment. The person-in-charge of the open-air storage site involved was charged with improper storage of chemical waste, including failure to provide proper warning signs and chemical waste spill containment installations at the site.

A spokesman for the EPD stressed that spent lubricating oil generated from recycling sites and vehicle maintenance workshops, which are classified as chemical waste, contain various toxic chemicals. Improper handling and storing of such waste will cause the spent lubricating oil to leak into nearby drains and soil, which pollutes the environment and causes harm to public health. The spokesman reminded members of the recycling trade and the vehicle repair business that they must register as chemical waste producers with the EPD in accordance with the CWR. Chemical waste must be properly packaged, labelled and stored, and has to be collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for treatment.

Anyone engaged in the illegal collection, storage and disposal of chemical waste will be prosecuted. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

