

Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited fined \$50,000 for illegal wastewater discharge again

The factory of Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited at Yuen Long Industrial Estate was again prosecuted for illegal discharge of industrial wastewater into the communal sewer. It was fined \$50,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (November 13) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) for the third time. The factory committed the same offence this June and August and was convicted and fined a total of \$55,000.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff conducted an inspection this June and found that the factory concerned did not operate its sewage treatment facility properly, resulting in the discharge of industrial wastewater into the communal sewer. The EPD staff then collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentrations of iron and zinc were both 93 milligrams/litre, which exceeded the upper limits of the WPCO licence by three and 18 times respectively. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the company. Following a series of law enforcement actions, no illegal discharge of excessive wastewater by the factory was found at present. The EPD will continue to seriously follow up on the repeated illegal discharge of the factory. The department will also step up inspections and strengthen enforcement actions, in order to combat persistent violations.

An EPD spokesman said that members of the industry should properly collect and treat industrial wastewater to ensure that the effluent discharge meets the standards as set out in the WPCO licence before being discharged into communal sewers. Discharging industrial wastewater with high heavy metal concentration will affect the operation of the Government's sewage treatment works. Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges commercial or industrial wastewater without proper treatment commits an offence. 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 subsequent convictions.