

Construction site contractors in Pok Fu Lam convicted of illegally discharging muddy water

The contractors of a construction site in Pok Fu Lam, China Harbour Engineering Company Limited and China Geo-Engineering Corporation, were convicted for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO) by discharging not properly treated wastewater to a nearby stream, and were fined \$60,000 and \$30,000 respectively at Eastern Magistrates' Courts yesterday (August 1).

In January this year, enforcement officers of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted an inspection at the construction site at Kai Lung Wan North, Pok Fu Lam South. During the inspection, it was found that muddy water was being discharged from the construction site to a nearby stream, contaminating the channel. The enforcement officers immediately collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentration of suspended solids was 430 milligrams/litre, greatly exceeding the upper limit of the relevant statutory discharge standards by 14 times. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD then instituted prosecution in accordance with the WPCO against the contractors of the construction site, a joint venture of the two companies mentioned above.

An EPD spokesman said that contractors of construction sites should install proper wastewater treatment facilities and maintain their effective operation to collect and properly treat the wastewater generated from construction sites, so as to avoid polluting river channels, communal drains or the coastal environment.

Under the WPCO, it is an offence for any person to discharge wastewater into the communal drainage system or a water body. 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 subsequent convictions.