

Illegal disposal of corrugated asbestos sheets exposed by EPD's surveillance camera system

A truck driver was convicted and fined \$15,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (April 16) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation as a result of illegally disposing of corrugated asbestos sheets and construction waste in a public car park on Tai Po Road, Sha Tin, adjacent to Kam Shan Country Park.

In September last year, a surveillance camera system installed by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) inside a public car park on Tai Po Road (Piper's Hill) captured a truck driver unloading construction waste from his vehicle onto a footpath. EPD enforcement officers investigated at the scene and found that a large majority of the waste contained corrugated asbestos sheets. The EPD segregated the waste immediately and arranged for a licensed chemical waste collector to handle and remove the waste so as to safeguard the health of pedestrians. Subsequently, the department successfully traced the truck driver involved based on the truck's number plate captured by the surveillance camera system. After collecting evidence, the EPD prosecuted the truck driver under the above regulation and ordinance.

An EPD spokesman explained that exposed asbestos material could release very fine asbestos fibres. Inhalation of asbestos fibres can cause serious lung diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. According to the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation, asbestos waste is a type of chemical waste and should not be mixed with household waste, nor discarded at refuse collection points or public dumping areas.

The spokesman reminded all members of the renovation, construction and transportation sectors that they must properly deliver construction waste and commercial and industrial waste to the government waste management facilities in accordance with the law. Chemical waste must be collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for treatment. It is unlawful to dispose of waste in public places or on the roadside. Under the WDO, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. A maximum fine of \$500,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.

Members of the public can help combat illegal activities and safeguard the health of the public by making a report to the department if they witness any illegal disposal of waste from vehicles. They can record videos or take photos and call the EPD hotline at 2838 3111.