

Operator of vehicle repair garage in Wong Tai Sin convicted and fined for illegal handling of spent lubricating oil

The operator of a vehicle repair garage in Wong Tai Sin was convicted at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (June 20) for contravening the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation by illegally handling spent lubricating oil. The operator was fined a total of \$10,000 for five offences under the Regulation.

During a blitz inspection of Wan Fung Street in Wong Tai Sin and its adjacent area in November last year, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) found that Choi Kee Motor Services, a vehicle repair garage, not only arbitrarily placed spent lubricating oil, which is classified as chemical waste, inside the garage after replacing a taxi's lubricating oil, but also did not label the container as spent lubricating oil, as well as not properly storing the chemical waste in accordance with the law. In addition, there was no warning sign inside the garage indicating the storage of chemical waste. It was also confirmed that the garage was not registered as a chemical waste producer. After gathering evidence and collecting samples at the scene for analysis, the EPD initiated five prosecutions against the operator of the garage, Raytech Engineering Limited, under the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

An EPD spokesman explained that spent lubricating oil generated from vehicle repairs in garages is classified as chemical waste, which contains various toxic chemicals. If not handled properly, spent lubricating oil will leak into nearby watercourses or soil, polluting the environment and causing harm to public health.

The spokesman reminded all operators of vehicle repair garages and members of the vehicle repair business that they should register as chemical waste producers with the EPD in accordance with the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation. Chemical waste generated from vehicle repairs 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. Moreover, for replacement of lubricating oil, vehicle owners should engage the services of vehicle repair garages or companies that have been registered with the EPD.

Anyone engaged in the illegal handling, 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.