

Unlicensed collector and illegal recycler fined for illegal handling of spent lubricating oil

An unlicensed collector delivered spent lubricating oil collected illegally to an illegal recycler in Tsz Wan Shan for processing. The collector and the recycler involved were convicted and fined a total of \$25,000 at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (June 20) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

During an enforcement operation in December last year, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) intercepted an unlicensed collector delivering by truck around 1 000 litres of spent lubricating oil, which is classified as chemical waste, collected from garages to Ngan Kee Petroleum Limited on Tsui Fung Street in Tsz Wan Shan. In addition, enforcement officers discovered around 600 litres of spent lubricating oil and mixers as well as stirrers inside Ngan Kee. Upon investigation, it was found that the company illegally blended spent oil with other petroleum products for processing and resold the mixture for profit. After gathering evidence, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the unlicensed collector and Ngan Kee under the WDO and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation. Lately, EPD enforcement officers conducted another inspection of the company and noticed that no spent lubricating oil or other chemical waste were handled or stored there. The EPD trusts that the enforcement action taken by the department has exerted a deterrent effect.

An EPD spokesman explained that spent lubricating oil generated from vehicle maintenance workshops is classified as chemical waste and contains various harmful chemicals. Improper handling of spent lubricating oil will pollute the environment and cause harm to public health.

The spokesman reminded all operators of 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 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 collection or disposal (including treatment, reprocessing or recycling) of chemical waste without a licence 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.