

Works companies convicted of marine pollution due to malpractice

Kuen Cheong Construction & Engineering Company Limited and its subcontractor, Uni-Sky Enterprise Limited, did not adopt appropriate preventative measures when loading marine mud onto a barge, resulting in splashing of marine mud generated from excavation works into the sea. The two works companies were convicted and fined a total of \$22,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (September 10) for contravening the Dumping at Sea Ordinance (DASO).

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that during regular monitoring of the operation of marine dumping permit holders in February this year, enforcement officers of the department discovered that when a number of dump trucks were loading marine mud onto a barge at a barging point in Tuen Mun, the concerned works company and its subcontractor did not adopt appropriate preventative measures. In the process, marine mud splashed into the sea on numerous occasions, breaching the conditions of the relevant marine dumping permit. After gathering evidence, the EPD thus prosecuted the above two companies under the DASO.

It is an offence for anyone to illegally dump substances or waste into the sea, as such illegal activity will also pollute the marine environment. Anyone who intends to dispose of marine mud generated from works through marine dumping at spoil grounds designated by the Government, shall obtain a marine dumping permit from the EPD and comply with the conditions of the relevant permit, including adopting appropriate measures to prevent marine mud from splashing into the sea during loading operations. The spokesman reminded persons-in-charge of works that they must properly handle marine mud or other works materials during transportation or loading operations. In addition, they must also properly train and manage their staff to ensure that marine mud and works materials will not be dumped, splashed or overflowed into the sea. According to the DASO, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment on first conviction.

More information about the control of marine dumping is available on the EPD's website:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/daso_gr.html.