

Taiwan's ASE ordered to shut factory for polluting river

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The Love River in the downtown area of the southern Taiwan city of Kaohsiung on September 22, 2009.

Taiwanese authorities on Friday ordered leading chip company Advanced Semiconductor Engineering Inc. (ASE) to shut down a factory in southern Taiwan for "intentionally" discharging toxic wastewater into a river.

ASE, a chip packaging and testing service provider, was told to suspend operations of its K7 plant in Kaohsiung city after it was found to have discharged industrial wastewater containing the [heavy metal](#) nickel and other toxic substances into a nearby river, officials at the city's environmental bureau said.

"The company was aware that the wastewater didn't meet the standards but didn't notify the bureau ... and still intentionally discharged (the wastewater) into the river. This is a serious violation," Chen Chin-der, chief of the Kaohsiung city environmental protection bureau, said.

"The plant submitted false information to the bureau to hide its actions. It discharged wastewater containing heavy metal that is a health hazard and affected the rice paddies in the downstream."

The order is indefinite until ASE can propose "solid improvement plans" to solve the water pollution problems before reopening, Chen added.

The bureau had slapped a fine of Tw\$600,000 (\$20,000) on ASE earlier this month but observers have criticised the punishment as too light for a company which reported a net profit of Tw\$16 billion last year.

ASE has said that the discharge was an unintentional accident caused by an erroneous opening of a valve and vowed to fix the problems.

However the bureau said ASE has been repeatedly cited for [water pollution](#) violations since 2011 but has yet to resolve the problems.

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