

Province, Nandu Daily, a newspaper based in South China's Guangdong Province, reported in December 2016.

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Data from monitoring sites serves as key input to central and local governments for policy-making on environmental protection, which under no circumstances should be tampered, Wang Gengchen, a research fellow from the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, told the Global Times on Friday.

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Besides the data falsification, China's environmental inspectors and officers are often blocked during their inspection.

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According to information regularly released on the website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, law enforcement officers in Jinan, capital of East China's Shandong Province, were held for one hour by staff from a local company during an inspection on April 16. The company also refused to provide any data and shut the doors of its offices during the inspection. Separately, work certificates of inspectors in Xingtai, Hebei were snatched during an inspection on April 17.

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During the first round of China's largest national-level air pollution inspection conducted in April, authorities found that among the 4,077 companies in 28 cities in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and nearby areas inspected, 2,808 had violated the rules.

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As China enhances its efforts to curb air pollution, it often faces resistance from local companies, as the cost of violation, which might include fines and detention in China, is far lower than the cost of compliance, Wang noted, adding that in some cases, companies are even shielded by local governments, which makes independent inspection more necessary.

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However, cheating or hindering inspectors from local governments is intolerable, as government bodies are fully aware of the consequences of the illegal behavior, Wang noted.

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