

15 owners or representatives of owners' corporations fined a total of over \$73,000 for causing fire hazards such as by propping open smoke stop doors

The Fire Services Department (FSD) has been mounting territory-wide special enforcement actions at old composite buildings since late April. As of end-August, the FSD inspected 930 old composite buildings and issued over 5 300 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) to relevant individuals or responsible parties, requiring them to abate the identified fire hazards within a specified timeframe. The fire hazards mainly involve wedging or propping open smoke stop doors and obstructing means of escape.

Fifteen owners or representatives of owners' corporations from 13 old composite buildings were prosecuted by the FSD for failing to comply with the requirements of the FHANs. They were subsequently convicted and fined a total of \$73,400 at Shatin Magistrates' Courts, Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts, Eastern Magistrates' Courts, Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts and Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts this week and last week. Above all, one of the old composite buildings was found to have multiple smoke stop doors propped open, resulting in its owners' corporation being fined a total of \$19,200 at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (September 20).

According to the Fire Services (Fire Hazard Abatement) Regulation, a person on whom an FHAN is served commits an offence if that person fails to comply with a requirement of the notice within the period specified in the notice, or if the person on whom a fire hazard abatement notice is served causes, permits or suffers the fire hazard to recur at any time within a period of 12 months after the date of service of the notice, the person commits an offence. Upon conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$100,000, and an additional fine of \$10,000 for each day the offense continues.

The FSD reminds the public not to wedge or prop open smoke stop doors or obstruct means of escape to ensure public safety.