

Mainlander jailed for making false representation, making and using false instruments

A male Mainlander charged with two counts of making false instruments, two counts of using false instruments and one count of making false representation to an Immigration Department (ImmD) staff member was sentenced to a total of 30 months' imprisonment yesterday (January 5) at the Shatin Magistrates' Court.

The 26-year-old defendant submitted an application for extension of stay to the ImmD in June 2020 and claimed that he was still under the employment of a local company with employment proof submitted. Upon inspection, doubt was cast on the authenticity of the submitted documents and the defendant was further investigated.

In the course of the investigation, the defendant admitted under caution that he was no longer employed by the company. As he wished to continue to stay in Hong Kong, he forged the employment proof and made false representation to the ImmD in order to have his application approved. The defendant was subsequently charged with the offences of making and using false instruments and making false representation to Immigration staff upon the application for extension of stay. At the trial, the defendant was convicted and sentenced to a total of 30 months' imprisonment by the Shatin Magistrates' Court yesterday.

"Under the laws of Hong Kong, any person who makes, uses or has in his custody a false instrument commits an offence and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, subject to imprisonment for 14 years. Moreover, any person who makes false representation to an Immigration officer commits an offence. Offenders are liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, subject to the maximum penalty of a fine of \$150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalty," an Immigration spokesman said.

Cancellation of FSD public education programmes

In view of the latest COVID-19 situation, the Fire Services Department (FSD) today (January 6) announced that all public education programmes will be cancelled and the Fire and Ambulance Services Education

Centre cum Museum will be temporarily closed starting from tomorrow (January 7) for 14 days until January 20.

The FSD has informed those who are affected and will continue to assess the latest situation and update the public accordingly. For enquiries, please call 2197 3699 (fire safety public education) or 2197 3600 (ambulance service public education) during office hours.

Housing Authority to tighten alienation restrictions of Subsidised Sale Flats

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will tighten the alienation restrictions of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) and Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) flats, starting from the Sale of HOS Flats 2022 (HOS 2022) and the Sale of GSH Flats 2022 (GSH 2022).

Subsidised Sale Flats (SSFs), including HOS and GSH flats, sold by the HA are subject to alienation restrictions. The current alienation restrictions apply to HOS and GSH flats first offered for sale from 2019 onwards. For these flats, owners can sell their flats in the open market upon payment of premium after 10 years from first assignment. For resale in the Secondary Market where premium is not paid, the owners may resell to the categories of buyers specified by the HA at no more than the original price in the first two years from first assignment, and at a freely negotiated price from the third year from first assignment.

At its meeting today (January 6), the Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) of the HA decided to lengthen the period where the owners can only sell at not more than the original price in the Secondary Market from the first two years since first assignment to the first five years since first assignment and lengthen the restriction period for sale in the open market from the first 10 years since first assignment to the first 15 years since first assignment, for HOS and GSH flats first offered for sale, starting from HOS 2022 and GSH 2022.

"The SHC has considered relevant considerations, including the increase in the number of shorter-term transactions in the Secondary Market in recent years, the general public view that HOS and GSH owners should not be allowed to trade their flats in the Secondary Market at a freely negotiated price so soon after their initial purchase, and that more affordable and attractive HOS and GSH flats will be offered for sale in future," a spokesman for the HA

said.

He stressed that the revised alienation restrictions would strike a balance between the need for sufficient safeguards against short-term speculation and the need to facilitate circulation of SSFs in the market.

[Court to enhance social distancing](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary announced today (January 6) that in light of the latest public health situation and related developments, with effect from Monday (January 10), the capacity limits of court premises will be adjusted to enhance social distancing, with a view to ensuring that the courts can continue to carry on normal business as safely as circumstances permit.

Court business is an essential public service. It enables the effective and efficient administration of justice. Striking a balance between public health and maintenance of normal court services, the Judiciary will reduce the seating capacity of the public gallery of courtrooms and court lobbies, as well as the capacity limits of registries and account offices where appropriate, to enhance social distancing and limit people flow. Broadcasting of proceedings will continue to be arranged where necessary and practicable. There will also be queuing or other crowd management arrangements where necessary.

All court hearings will continue to proceed as scheduled unless directed otherwise by the court. Parties will be given directions by the court should there be any changes.

For civil proceedings, the court may make greater use of remote hearings and/or paper disposal for proceedings where appropriate. The court will give directions for individual cases in this regard.

The operating hours of court registries remain unchanged.

For public health reasons, the Judiciary will continue to maintain all existing preventive and crowd management measures, including enhanced cleansing and disinfection of public and staff areas, mandatory body temperature checks and checks on use of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app upon entry into Judiciary premises, mandatory wearing of surgical masks at all times unless otherwise directed by Judges or Judicial Officers, providing hand sanitisers at different locations, and installing protective shields and partitions in courtrooms as appropriate.

Any court users including parties and legal representatives who have a fever or a high body temperature, and/or are subject to any quarantine

requirement or medical surveillance are not allowed to enter Judiciary premises. They should apply to the court as soon as practicable for permission of absence or inform the court with reasons for absence as appropriate.

The Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the public health situation with a view to putting in place timely and appropriate measures. Court users should check the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk) for updated information, and follow the instructions of the Judiciary staff and security personnel.

Latest service arrangements of Public Records Office of Government Records Service

The Government Records Service (GRS) announced today (January 6) that in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, further measures have to be adopted to maintain social distancing. Starting from tomorrow (January 7), the Search Room of the Public Records Office (PRO) will be temporarily closed and the loan and circulation service for holdings will be suspended. The Exhibition Hall in the Hong Kong Public Records Building will also be temporarily closed. Group visits and public education programmes will continue to be conducted online.

The above measures will be implemented until further notice. The GRS will closely monitor the situation and review the above arrangements in a timely manner. For updates, please visit the GRS website (www.grs.gov.hk) and the PRO Facebook page (www.facebook.com/grs.publicrecordsoffice). For enquiries, please call 2195 7700 during the opening hours of the PRO, or email proinfo@grs.gov.hk.