

Beauty parlour salesperson imprisoned for engaging in aggressive commercial practices

A saleslady of a beauty parlour was sentenced to two months' imprisonment by the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (October 5) after being convicted of engaging in aggressive commercial practices in the course of selling beauty services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Hong Kong Customs received information in July last year alleging that a staff member of a beauty parlour in Tsim Sha Tsui had engaged in unfair trade practices and coerced a customer to procure beauty treatment packages when selling beauty services.

After investigation, Customs officers found that a saleslady of the beauty parlour had imposed undue influence on a customer, and had induced the customer to procure an additional beauty service valued at over \$130,000 by saying that the customer could get a one-off refund of all beauty services, including those procured earlier, if she bought new additional beauty services. However, in fact, the beauty parlour had no such refund policy and the customer could not cancel nor receive a refund for all of the old and new treatment packages.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence reflects the seriousness of the offence, and a clear warning has also been delivered to unscrupulous practitioners in the beauty service industry.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair the consumer's freedom of choice or conduct in relation to the product concerned, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).