

Chinese Overseas Friendship House (HK) Limited and its management fined for contravening Employment Ordinance

Chinese Overseas Friendship House (HK) Limited and its three management staff were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay wages on time and defaulting on the sums awarded by the Labour Tribunal (LT) with respect to several employees, contrary to the Employment Ordinance (EO). The case was heard at Eastern Magistrates' Courts on December 6, 2021, and concluded today (January 10). The company and the above persons pleaded guilty. They were fined a total of \$192,500 and ordered to pay the employees an outstanding sum of about \$76,000 jointly and severally.

The company failed to pay five employees' wages totalling about \$250,000 within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods or the date of termination of employment, and seven employees the awarded sums totalling about \$330,000 within 14 days after the date set by the LT award, as required by the EO. The management staff concerned were convicted for their consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences committed by the company.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors, managers and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the statutory time limit stipulated in the EO and to pay the awarded sums according to the LT or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.