

Company fined and its director sentenced to community service order for contravening Employment Ordinance

MEML Holdings Limited and its director were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay wages and defaulting on the sums awarded by the Labour Tribunal (LT) with respect to three employees, contrary to the Employment Ordinance (EO). The company and its director pleaded guilty earlier at Eastern Magistrates' Courts and, as ordered, paid into the courts a sum of about \$750,000 owed to the three employees. The company was fined \$165,000 and its director was sentenced to 240 hours' community service order today (October 21).

The company failed to pay three employees' wages within seven days after the expiry of the wage period or the date of termination of employment, and the awarded sum within 14 days after the date set out by the LT award as required by the EO. The awarded sum covering the above wages amounted to about \$750,000. The director concerned was prosecuted and convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences committed by the company.

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