

Employment agency convicted for overcharging foreign domestic helpers

A licensee of an employment agency (EA) was convicted at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 10) for overcharging nine foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) and was fined a total of \$84,000. The court also ordered the EA to refund the placement fee in excess, totalling \$60,297, to the FDHs concerned.

From October 2018 to January 2019, the Employment Agencies Administration (EAA) of the Labour Department (LD) received complaints from nine FDHs against Philip-Indonesian Helpers Employment Limited, located in North Point, for charging them excessive commission. The complainants agreed to assist in the investigation. As there was sufficient evidence following investigation that the concerned EA had overcharged them, the LD decided to take out prosecution against the licensee of the EA.

According to the law, an EA is not allowed to collect from a job seeker any fees or charges other than the prescribed commission, which is an amount not exceeding 10 per cent of the first month's salary of the job seeker upon successful placement.

The LD reminds EAs to operate in full compliance with the law, as well as the Code of Practice for Employment Agencies at all times. Failure to do so may lead to prosecution and possible revocation of licences. The Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2018, effective since February 9, 2018 also raises the maximum penalty for overcharging job seekers to a fine of \$350,000 and imprisonment for three years.

For complaints about unlicensed operation or overcharging of commission by EAs, please call the EAA of the LD at 2115 3667, or visit its office at Unit 906, 9/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon.