

Man fined for operating and managing unlicensed guesthouses

A man was fined \$36,000 for two charges at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (September 23) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in December last year and January this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Shanghai Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on a daily or hourly basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The man responsible for operating and managing the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaenq@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".