

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two women were fined \$2,000 and \$8,000 respectively at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (September 25) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The court heard that in February this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a licensed guesthouse on Dundas Street in Mong Kok. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in an unlicensed guesthouse in the same building on a daily basis. The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 21(3)(b) of the Ordinance for managing a guesthouse in a premises other than the one indicated in the licence.

Furthermore, OLA officers inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Tung Choi Street in Mong Kok in March this year. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on an hourly basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for 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 (hadlaeng@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".