

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two women were each fined \$5,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (July 22) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in January and December last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Fuk Wing Street in Sham Shui Po and on Sai Yee Street in Prince Edward. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room or "capsule-like accommodation" in these guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The women responsible for managing the premises were 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".