

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Three men and a woman were fined from \$2,000 to \$8,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts and the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (July 29) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that between September last year and January this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected four suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Man Cheong Street in Yau Ma Tei, Apliu Street in Sham Shui Po, Kwok Shui Road in Tsuen Wan and Portland Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room 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 men and woman 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".