

Operator and managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

A man and three women were fined \$10,000 each at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (January 23) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that between July and September last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected four suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Argyle Street, Kimberley Road, Reclamation Street and Yen Chow Street in Kowloon. 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 and the women responsible for operating and 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 will 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".