

Operators and managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two men and two women were charged with contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (December 4). A man and a woman were fined \$2,000 and \$5,000 respectively, and the other man and woman were fined \$10,000 and \$4,000 respectively for two charges.

The courts heard that in May and August this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected three suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Lai Chi Kok Road, Tong Mi Road and Pei Ho Street in Kowloon. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms 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 men and 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 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".