

Operators of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two men and a woman were fined from \$4,000 to \$8,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (May 29) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in October last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected three suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Des Voeux Road West in Sai Ying Pun, Bonham Strand and Bonham Strand West in Sheung Wan. 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 woman responsible for operating 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 (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".