

Persons and company convicted of illegally operating private columbarium

Two persons and a company were convicted of illegally operating a private columbarium, contravening the Private Columbaria Ordinance, with a fine penalty by the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (February 22). A criminal record was registered against the two persons.

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today that the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) of the FEHD had earlier detected that a columbarium in Bulkeley Street, Hung Hom, was suspected to have operated and managed a private columbarium without a licence under the Ordinance. An operation was thus mounted at the premises. The operators of the unlicensed columbarium were arrested and prosecuted.

Under the Ordinance, any person who operates, keeps, manages or in any other way has control of a columbarium otherwise than under a licence commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for three years, or on conviction on indictment to a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment for seven years.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The department will continue to take stringent enforcement actions against illegally operated private columbaria. Members of the public should not buy or rent niches from any unlicensed private columbaria."

"If members of the public detect any activities of illegally operating a private columbarium, they should immediately report it to the PCAO by calling the hotline 3142 2300," the spokesman added.