

## Property owner fined over \$1,450,000 for not complying with removal orders

A property owner was convicted and fined over \$1,450,000 in total at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts last week for failing to comply with removal orders issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123).

The case involved several dozen unauthorised structures with a total area of about 12 000 square metres on a lot in D.D. 107, Yuen Long. As the unauthorised building works (UBWs) were carried out without the prior approval and consent from the Buildings Department (BD), three removal orders were served on the owner under section 24(1) of the BO.

Failing to comply with the removal orders, the owner was prosecuted by the BD and was fined a total of \$1,457,100 by the Court, of which \$1,157,100 was the fine for the number of days that the offence continued, upon conviction at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on April 19.

A spokesman for the BD said today (April 24), "UBWs may lead to serious consequences. Owners must comply with removal orders without delay. The BD will continue to take enforcement actions against owners who have failed to comply with removal orders, including instigation of prosecution, so as to ensure building safety."

Failure to comply with a removal order without a reasonable excuse is a serious offence under the BO. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$200,000 and one year's imprisonment, and a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence continues.