

## Property owner fined over \$90,000 for persistently not complying with removal order

A property owner was convicted and fined over \$90,000 at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts last week for persistently failing to comply with a removal order issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123).

The order involved erection of partition walls in a unit of a composite building at Chatham Court, for subdividing the unit into several individual rooms. As the alteration works obstructed the means of escape and contravened the Building (Planning) Regulations, a removal order was served on the owner under section 24(1) of the BO.

Failing to comply with the removal order, the owner was prosecuted by the Buildings Department (BD) in 2018 and was fined about \$50,000 upon conviction by the court. As the owner persisted in not complying with the removal order, the owner was prosecuted again. The owner was convicted again and fined \$90,800 at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts on July 18.

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

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