

Property owners fined \$60,000 for not complying with removal order

A property owner who failed to comply with a removal order issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123) was convicted and fined \$60,000 at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts last week.

The case involved an unauthorised swimming pool and an unauthorised ground floor structure with area of about 67 and 54 square metres respectively at a village house in Tai Kek, Pat Heung, Yuen Long. As the unauthorised building works (UBWs) were carried out without prior approval and consent from the Buildings Department (BD), 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 BD. The owner subsequently completed the removal. After inspection and confirmation by the BD, the owner pleaded guilty and was fined \$60,000 at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on February 2.

A spokesman for the BD said today (February 9), "UBWs may lead to serious consequences. Owners must comply with 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, 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 a fine of \$200,000 and one year's imprisonment, and a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence continues.