

Public housing resident convicted by court for making false statement

A public rental housing (PRH) tenant was sentenced to imprisonment for making a false statement that he did not own any domestic property in Hong Kong. A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (May 16) reminded residents of PRH estates to declare truthfully their income and assets.

A PRH resident living at Ap Lei Chau Estate in Hong Kong declared in a 2022 Income and Assets Declaration Form that he did not have any domestic property ownership in Hong Kong. A subsequent investigation revealed that this resident solely owned a domestic property in Tsuen Wan at the material time.

This resident was prosecuted for knowingly making a false statement, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance. He was convicted in Eastern Magistrates' Courts on May 14. Given the gravity of the offence, the defendant was sentenced to two months' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months). The HD has issued a notice-to-quit to this PRH tenant to recover the subject PRH flat.

The spokesman seriously reminded all households living in PRH to complete their Income and Assets Declaration Forms accurately, as doing so provides the foundation for the assessment of rent and their eligibilities for continuing residence. Before furnishing particulars specified in the requisition required by the Hong Kong Housing Authority, households should read the content and completion guidelines of the Income and Assets Declaration Forms carefully and compute their income and assets in accordance with the methods specified. Otherwise, they may be prosecuted for making a false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance. Once convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and imprisonment for six months. Households may also be prosecuted for neglecting to furnish information as specified in a declaration form, contrary to Section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance, and if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for three months. The HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information or even recover their PRH units.