

Public housing resident convicted for making false statement knowingly

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (January 22) reminded residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates to truthfully declare their income and assets.

A PRH resident living at Fu Shan Estate in Wong Tai Sin, who did not declare his ownership of a domestic property on an income and asset declaration form in 2018, was convicted at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts yesterday. The presiding magistrate ordered him to pay a fine of \$5,000 and also sentenced him to one month's imprisonment (suspended for 18 months).

In this case, the PRH resident declared on an income and asset declaration form in May 2018 that he did not own a domestic property in Hong Kong. Subsequent investigation revealed that he had concealed his joint ownership of a domestic property in Sai Ying Pun during the declaration period. The resident was prosecuted by the Housing Department for making a false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance.

The spokesman said that households should complete the income and asset declaration forms accurately, as doing so provides the foundation for the assessment of rent and their eligibility for continuing residence. Before making the declarations, households should read the content and completion guidelines of the income and asset declaration form carefully and compute their income and assets in accordance with the methods specified therein. Otherwise, they may be prosecuted for making false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and imprisonment for six months) or being prosecuted for neglecting to furnish information as specified in a declaration form, contrary to Section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for three months).

In addition, the HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information. According to the revised Well-off Tenants Policies endorsed in December 2016, PRH households with domestic property ownership in Hong Kong will be required to vacate their PRH flats, irrespective of their levels of household income or assets.