

Public housing residents convicted by court for making false statement knowingly

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (January 10) reminded residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates to declare truthfully their income and assets.

A PRH resident, who did not declare her ownership of a domestic property in Hong Kong during the declaration cycle in April 2018, was convicted at the Eastern Magistrates' Court on January 8 and ordered to pay a fine of \$40,000.

In this case, the PRH resident declared during the declaration cycle in April 2018 that she owned a 40 per cent interest in a commercial unit. Subsequent investigation revealed that she had concealed that, during the declaration period, she also owned a domestic property in Hong Kong. The resident was prosecuted by the HD for making a false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance.

The spokesman said that households should complete their 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 declaration forms carefully and compute their income and assets in accordance with the methods specified therein. Otherwise, they may be prosecuted for making a 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 for neglecting to furnish information as specified in the declaration forms, 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.