

Public housing tenant convicted by court for making false statements

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (February 16) reminded residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates to declare truthfully their income and assets.

A PRH resident living at Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling, declared on a 2021 Income and Asset Declaration Form that he did not have domestic property ownership in Hong Kong, and the total household net asset value did not exceed 100 times the prevailing PRH Income Limit (the asset limit for that household was \$2,450,000). A subsequent investigation revealed that the resident solely owned a piece of land with domestic properties in Sheung Shui, the value of which was approximately \$15,000,000. He was prosecuted by the HD for making a false statement knowingly and neglecting to furnish particulars specified in the requisition, contrary to section 26(1)(a) and section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance respectively.

The defendant pleaded guilty to two alternative charges of making false statement knowingly and neglecting to furnish particulars specified in the requisition in Fanling Magistrates' Courts yesterday (February 15) afternoon. He was convicted and sentenced to 10 days' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and fined \$2,000 for the two offences.

The spokesman said that tenants living in PRH should complete their 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, tenants 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. 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 be 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). Notwithstanding the above, the HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information, or even recover their PRH units.