

Public rental housing applicant sentenced to imprisonment for making false statement

A public rental housing (PRH) tenant was sentenced to a total of 30 days' imprisonment for not declaring Hong Kong domestic property ownership in the PRH application, contrary to the Housing Ordinance. The PRH unit concerned has been recovered.

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (October 22) reminded PRH residents and applicants to truthfully declare their income and assets.

The PRH tenant did not declare her ownership of domestic property in Hong Kong in two declaration forms submitted to the HD in 2018 and 2019 for PRH application, and thereby succeeded in obtaining a PRH unit in Shek Mun Estate. Subsequent investigation revealed that she owned a domestic property in Yuen Long and she would not be eligible for PRH application.

The tenant was prosecuted by the HD for knowingly making a false statement in respect of her PRH application, contrary to Section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance. She was convicted in the Shatin Magistrates' Courts earlier and was adjourned for sentence yesterday. Having considered the gravity of the offence and the precious PRH resources involved, the presiding magistrate considered that it was not suitable to make a community service order. She was sentenced to 20 days' imprisonment for each of the two summonses, with 10 days to be run concurrently. Thus, she was sentenced to a total of 30 days' imprisonment. Additionally, the HD recovered the PRH unit in May this year.

The spokesman reminded all PRH applicants that if they were convicted by the court for making false statement knowingly during PRH application, contrary to Section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. The PRH application concerned will be cancelled, while any allocated PRH unit will be recovered by the HD.

The spokesman reiterated that, in general, the public recognises the HD's efforts in combating the abuse of public housing resources. The HD will continue to adopt multipronged and risk-based measures to comprehensively combat the abuse of PRH.