

Renovation company and director convicted of engaging in wrongly accepting payment

A renovation company and its male director were convicted and respectively sentenced to a fine of \$2,500 and nine weeks' imprisonment today (March 26) at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts for engaging in wrongly accepting payment, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). The company and the male director were earlier convicted of applying a false trade description to renovation services on February 29, and were fined \$3,000 and sentenced to imprisonment for eight months respectively. The two sentences of the male director are to run concurrently, making a total of eight months' imprisonment.

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that a renovation company was suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices in the online sale of various types of custom-made furniture.

After an investigation, Customs found that the male director of the renovation company concerned sold different types of custom-made furniture through a social media platform page. However, he failed to supply the relevant products or procure a third person to supply equivalent products within a reasonable time after accepting payments from a customer. The director later told the customer that the delivery would be delayed or arrangement of refunds could be made, but no follow-up action was taken eventually.

Customs welcomes the sentence and reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers should also purchase products at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence if, at the time of acceptance of payment, the trader intends not to supply the product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).