

# REO reports leakage of some electors' particulars

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) said today (March 25) that a staff member wrongly processed files containing the particulars of about 15 000 electors and sent them to an unknown email address.

The REO immediately looked into the matter upon notification of the incident. An initial investigation revealed that a staff member did not follow the departmental guidelines, as she intended to send files containing electors' particulars to her personal email address on the evening of March 23 to facilitate her work. However, the staff member entered an incorrect email address, resulting in the files being sent to an unknown recipient. The REO has immediately notified the recipient concerned via email to permanently delete the relevant files at once and contact the REO for follow-up.

The Chinese and English names as well as the residential addresses of about 15 000 electors are stored in the files concerned. The files contain information provided by the Housing Department for the REO to check the registered residential addresses of the electors. There is no information such as identity card numbers, dates of birth and genders.

The REO apologises to the electors involved. The incident has been reported to the Police to prevent further leakage of the relevant data. The incident has also been reported to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (OPCPD) and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO). The staff member concerned has been immediately deployed away from her existing duty. The REO will remind all staff members to comply with the departmental guidelines, exercise due care in handling personal particulars related to electors and not to send any files containing those particulars to personal email addresses.

The REO will stringently follow up on and further investigate the incident. A comprehensive review of the incident and appropriate improvement measures will be in place, after consulting the OPCPD and OGCIO, to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents. Electors who are affected by the incident will be notified. The REO has also reported the incident and the above follow-up actions to the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC). The EAC instructed the REO to take remedial actions, which include preventing further leakage of the relevant information, conducting a thorough investigation to avoid recurrence of incidents of this kind and strengthening efforts to remind staff members of the importance of data protection and privacy.

The REO has all along been in compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and relevant codes of practice issued by the OPCPD from time to time, as well as the guidelines and codes required by the OGCIO, in handling voter registration particulars prudently and adopting data protection measures.

To enhance the accuracy and completeness of the particulars of voter registration, the REO conducts various checking measures to check voter registration particulars on the final registers, including data matching exercises with other government departments on the registered particulars and implementation of the inquiry process.

Electors who have any enquiries can call the REO hotline on 2891 1001.