

## Suspected theft case involving personal data held by FEHD

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (January 2) that the department attaches utmost importance on a suspected theft case of document files and has reported the incident to the Police for follow-up. Since the files contain personal data, the department has immediately contacted all the data subjects affected to offer its apologies and appeal for their heightened vigilance.

The incident involves two internal document files stored at the Kowloon City District Environmental Hygiene Office. These files contained records of public complaints against environmental nuisances in the district, including the names and contact information (telephone numbers or email addresses) of approximately 100 complainants.

The spokesman said, "The office area concerned is access-controlled by a digital lock and also has an independent door lock. As the incident may involve criminal act of theft, the FEHD has reported the case to the Police for follow-up and will fully co-operate with the investigation. The FEHD has also notified the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, and notified the data subjects affected by the incident."

The spokesman for the FEHD stressed, "The department offered its apologies to those affected. The FEHD attaches great importance to the security of personal data, and has laid down clear internal guidelines and control mechanism to ensure compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and other relevant laws and ordinances. Staff members are also regularly reminded to adhere to these guidelines and provisions. While the case is believed to be an isolated incident, the department will take stringent action should the investigation reveal any negligence or mishandling by any officer. The FEHD will also review the current personal data security measures to ensure effective protection of the personal data it collects."