

Public housing residents convicted by court for not declaring Hong Kong domestic property ownerships or total household net asset value exceeding limit

Four public rental housing (PRH) residents were each sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and were fined \$5,000 or \$10,000 for not declaring their Hong Kong domestic property ownerships or that the total household net asset value exceeded 100 times the prevailing PRH Income Limits in making a declaration of their income and assets and applying for purchase of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats.

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (July 9) reminded residents of PRH estates and HOS applicants to declare their income and assets truthfully.

Information on the four cases is as follows:

Case 1:

A PRH resident living in Shun Lee Estate declared in the Income and Assets Declaration Forms in 2022 and the application form for Sale of Home Ownership Scheme Flats in 2023 that he did not have any domestic property ownership in Hong Kong. Subsequent investigations revealed that he solely owned a domestic property in the Central and Western District at the material time.

Case 2:

A PRH resident living in Choi Tak Estate declared in the Income and Assets Declaration Forms in 2022 that the total household net asset value of his two-person household did not exceed 100 times the prevailing PRH Income Limit of \$1,960,000. Subsequent investigations revealed that he owned 50 per cent of an industrial property in Ap Lei Chau with an estimated value of about \$6.2 million, which had exceeded the aforesaid asset limit.

Case 3:

A PRH resident living in Hau Tak Estate declared in the Income and Assets Declaration Forms in 2022 that she did not have any domestic property ownership in Hong Kong. Subsequent investigations revealed that she solely owned a domestic property in the Tseung Kwan O District at the material time.

Case 4:

A PRH resident living in Ping Tin Estate declared in the Income and Assets Declaration Forms in 2022 that she did not have any domestic property ownership in Hong Kong. Subsequent investigations revealed that she solely owned a domestic property in the Tuen Mun District at the material time.

The PRH resident in Case 1 was prosecuted for making a false statement knowingly and making a statement which he knew to be false or misleading as to a material particular to the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) in applying for HOS flats, contrary to section 26(1)(a) and section 26(2) of the Housing Ordinance respectively. The PRH residents in Cases 2 to 4 were prosecuted for refusing or neglecting to furnish information specified in the declaration form, contrary to section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance. The aforesaid PRH residents were convicted in the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts yesterday (July 8). Given the gravity of the offence, the defendants were sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and were fined \$5,000 or \$10,000. The HD has already recovered one subject PRH flat in June and is following up on the remaining cases.

The spokesman reminded PRH residents that households living in PRH should accurately complete their Income and Assets Declaration Forms. Before furnishing particulars specified in the requisition required by the HA, households should read the content and completion guidelines of the Income and Assets Declaration Forms 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. Alternatively, they may be prosecuted for refusing or 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. The HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information furnished by the households or even recover their PRH units.

Moreover, if subsidised sale flats applicants make statements to the HA which they know to be false or misleading as to a material particular in their purchase of such flats, they may be prosecuted under section 26(2) of the Housing Ordinance. If convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$500,000 fine and imprisonment for one year. If the applicant has already purchased and completed the assignment of the flat, the court may order the purchasers to forfeit to the HA a sum equivalent to the difference between the purchase price (including the premium) and the market value of the flat.

The spokesman reiterated that the public, in general, recognises the HD's efforts in combating the abuse of PRH resources. The HD will continue to adopt multipronged and risk-based measures to comprehensively combat tenancy abuse. The HD will take decisive tenancy management and law enforcement actions against tenants who are found to have abused PRH and breached the tenancy agreement or relevant policies, in order to ensure that the precious PRH resources are allocated to those most in need.

SJ to lead government officials to attend joint conference on Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, in his capacity as the chair of the sub-group on Belt and Road development under the Steering Group on Integration into National Development, will lead Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government officials, including the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau; the Under Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Joseph Chan; and the Under Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Ms Lillian Cheong, to attend the seventh Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative to be held on Friday morning (July 12), with departures for Beijing on both July 10 and July 11.

During his stay in Beijing, Mr Lam will visit the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and have meetings with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to follow up on the implementation of the measures of allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law and to choose Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration, and to discuss the preparatory work for the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation. Mr Lam will also call on the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council to give a briefing on the progress of the Department of Justice's major policy measures including the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy, promoting the development of Hong Kong as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, and the promotion of rule of law education.

Mr Lam will return to Hong Kong on July 12 afternoon. During Mr Lam's absence, the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, will be the Acting Secretary for Justice. During Mr Yau's absence, the Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, will be the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development.

HAD opens temporary heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will continue to open 19 community halls/community centres as temporary heat shelters today (July 9).

The temporary heat shelters will remain open for people to take refuge from the heat when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force. From 10.30pm to 8am the next day, the temporary heat shelters will also provide bedding and a

sleeping place for people in need. The shelters are manned by duty attendants.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Island:

Central and Western –
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –
Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –
Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –
Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –
Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –
Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –

Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building, 39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –

Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –

Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –

Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex, 38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau,
Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –

Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –

Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –

Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –

Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –

Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –

Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

In addition to the above heat shelters, a number of community halls/community centres can also be used for taking refuge from the heat during their operating hours. For their address details, please browse the following

document: www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, July 9, 2024 is 106.6 (same as yesterday's index).

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on July 8 to noon today (July 9), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 218 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.htm).

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The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 66 002 samples of food imported from Japan (including 42 496 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 15 892 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.