

Two renovation contractors convicted of violating Trade Descriptions Ordinance

Two renovation contractors were sentenced to 80 and 180 hours of community service order today (June 8) respectively at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts and Eastern Magistrates' Courts for violating the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). One of the contractors was also ordered by the court to pay compensation of \$25,000 to the victim of the case.

Hong Kong Customs received information alleging that two renovation contractors had engaged in unfair trade practices in the supply of renovation services.

After investigation, it was revealed that the renovation contractor in the first case had made false claims of including some renovation items free of charge. However, the contractor later charged extra fees for those items. The contractor had also made false claims related to the pricing and the supplier of electrical appliance items involved. The total amount of the renovation works contract was \$370,000.

In the second case, the renovation contractor had engaged in a misleading omission in respect of the total contract price. The contractor, upon receiving from the customer \$100,000 as the full payment for the renovation works, asked for an additional charge of \$80,000 for the same renovation works after the commencement of the renovation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who in the course of any trade or business applies a false trade description to any services commits an offence. Any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information or provides material information in a manner that is unclear, unintelligible, ambiguous or untimely and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision also commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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