

Woman fined for operating unlicensed guesthouse

A woman was fined \$15,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (February 12) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in May last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Hoi Wan Street in Quarry Bay. The OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for operating the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".