

FEHD smashes suspected illegal private columbarium in Hung Hom

The Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) cracked down on a suspected illegal private columbarium in Hung Hom this afternoon (January 15).

The operator of the private columbarium in this case was suspected of keeping ashes at the subject premises without a licence under the Private Columbaria Ordinance (the Ordinance).

The Court issued search warrants to PCAO officers to authorise them to search the abovementioned columbarium in Hung Hom and the connected premises in Yuen Long. During the operation, PCAO officers seized a number of exhibits and arrested three persons. An investigation is still ongoing.

Under the Ordinance, any person who operates, keeps, manages or in any other way has control of a columbarium otherwise than under a licence commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for three years; or on conviction on indictment to a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment for seven years.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The department will continue to take stringent enforcement action against illegally operated private columbaria. Members of the public should not buy or rent niches from any unlicensed private columbaria.

"If members of the public detect any activities of illegally operating a private columbarium, they should immediately report it to the Private Columbaria Affairs Office by calling hotline 3142 2300."