

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 morning (November 17).

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

The Court issued a search warrant to PCAO officers to authorise them to search the above-mentioned premises. During the operation, PCAO officers seized a number of exhibits and arrested two persons. An investigation is 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 PCAO by calling the hotline 3142 2300."