

# Person convicted of managing unlicensed employment agency

The Labour Department (LD) reminds any person who wishes to operate an employment agency (EA) to be properly licensed before operation or he/she may face prosecution.

The reminder follows the conviction of a person, who was fined \$100,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (December 31), for managing an EA without a valid licence (in Fanling under the business name Sincere Honest Employment Centre Limited).

In August 2018, the Employment Agencies Administration (EAA) of the LD received a complaint against the company concerned from an employer seeking to engage a foreign domestic helper. As investigation revealed sufficient evidence that the company had operated an EA without a licence and the complainant was willing to act as prosecution witness, the LD decided to take out prosecution against the company and a responsible person of the company.

Sincere Honest Employment Centre Limited was earlier convicted at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts for operating an EA without a valid licence and was fined \$20,000. Today, a responsible person of the company was also convicted of managing the unlicensed EA.

According to the law, any establishment or person operating a business in Hong Kong for the purpose of obtaining employment for another person or supplying personnel to an employer is subject to the regulation of Part XII of the Employment Ordinance (EO) and the Employment Agency Regulations. Irrespective of the modus operandi or the job types involved, all EAs must obtain a licence issued by the LD before undertaking any EA activities. Except the holder of an EA licence or an associate of the licence holder, no one shall operate, manage or assist in the management of an EA, or else he/she may face prosecution.

LD reminds EAs to operate in full compliance with the law as well as the Code of Practice for EAs at all times. Failure to do so may lead to prosecution and/or revocation of licence. The Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 enacted on February 9, 2018, has raised the penalty for the offences of unlicensed operation of EAs and overcharging job-seekers commissions to a maximum fine of \$350,000 and imprisonment for three years.

For enquiries or complaints about unlicensed operation or overcharging of commissions by EAs, please call EAA of the LD at 2115 3667 or visit its office at Unit 906, 9/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon.

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# CHP closely monitors cluster of pneumonia cases on Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 31) closely monitoring a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province, and has contacted the National Health Commission for further information.

According to an announcement from the Health Commission of Hubei Province, a number of pneumonia cases related to a local seafood market was recently reported in Wuhan. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission has commenced investigation and so far identified 27 cases. Among them, seven cases were serious and the remaining were stable. Symptoms were mainly fever while a few had presented with shortness of breath. All patients are isolated and receiving treatment. Contact tracing of close contacts and medical surveillance are ongoing.

The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission announced that assessment by relevant experts revealed that the cases were compatible with viral pneumonia. For the time being, no obvious human-to-human transmission has been observed and no healthcare workers have been infected. The causative pathogen and cause of infection are still under investigation.

Locally, while surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The CHP's Port Health Division conducts health surveillance measures at all boundary control points. Thermal imaging systems are in place for body temperature checks on inbound travellers. Suspected cases with serious infectious diseases identified will be immediately referred to public hospitals for isolation, treatment and follow-up. The CHP has also informed the Hospital Authority about the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan.

Travellers are reminded to wear surgical masks and seek medical attention if they present with respiratory symptoms, and reveal their travel history to doctors. The CHP will continue to closely monitor the latest situation of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan and update the surveillance criteria and testing strategies accordingly.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or

door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel or hand dryer. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Avoid touching poultry/birds or their droppings, and avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled.
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if having a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once.
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if having a fever or other symptoms, inform the doctor of recent travel history and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.

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## [Man holding charged with murder and theft](#)

Police today (December 31) laid a holding charge against a 27-year-old non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) man with one count of murder and one count of theft.

The man was arrested on December 29 in suspected connection with a murder and theft case in Yuen Long on December 28, in which a 61-year-old man died.

The case will be mentioned at Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on January 2,

2020.

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## **New District Officer for Southern District assumes office**

Mr Francis Cheng has assumed the post of District Officer (Southern) today (December 31), succeeding Mrs Dorothy Ma.

Mr Cheng joined the Administrative Service in 1994. He has served in various bureaux and departments including the former City and New Territories Administration; the Home Affairs Department; the former Education and Manpower Bureau; the Security Bureau; the Housing Department; the former Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau; the former Economic Development and Labour Bureau; the Transport and Housing Bureau; and the Labour and Welfare Bureau.

He was the Assistant Director (Cross-Boundary and International) of the Environmental Protection Department before taking up the new post.

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## **SDEV speaks to media on quarterly land sale programme for January to March 2020**

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at the question-and-answer session of the media session today (December 31) on the quarterly land sale programme for January to March 2020:

Reporter: With the economy going down and the social unrest in Hong Kong, how confident are you that the developers will still be willing to invest in these lands? Do you think that they will become more conservative when it comes to bidding? Also, regarding the Kai Tak land, there was a developer abandoning the land in Kai Tak before, so why are you still rolling out this new piece of land in Kai Tak?

Secretary for Development: On your two questions, maybe the first question first. Things are still moving forward. We just successfully tendered a site on top of the Express Rail Link station in West Kowloon. If you look at Kai

Tak, we actually also succeeded in selling a site by tender, the site near the (Kai Tak) Sports Park. Also, if you look at the residential market, the residential sites, even in Kai Tak, still go out quite successfully. So, we remain confident that, if you look forward, commercial and residential sites in Hong Kong will still be taken up, provided they are at the right price. And then, of course it depends on a lot of factors when it comes to the exact price of a particular site.

Your question about the site at Kai Tak. Its location is an advantage. If you look at the map, it is right next to the Sung Wong Toi Station of the future Shatin to Central Link. Geographically, it is actually better than the site that I referred to earlier, the site near the Sports Park. So, there are good reasons that the site should successfully go out. Another reason that we would like to sell the site is that we have included in this site a requirement of construction of welfare facilities for the elderly and young people. You know that such facilities these days are hard to come by. So, if there is a way through which we could speed up the supply of these facilities, we would love to do that.

Reporter: For the question that with the economy going down and with the social unrest going on in Hong Kong, do you think the developers will become more conservative when it comes to bidding?

Secretary for Development: I think it is hard for me to put myself in the shoes of developers. So, I will just refer you to some of the tendering exercises that we just did after June this year. As I said, the site on top of the Express Rail Link station in West Kowloon has still gone out, albeit at a price that was lower than that estimated about 12, 18 months ago. But the market is the market. So market fluctuation is something that we all have to accept.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)