

Contractor convicted and fined for carrying out illegal works in conservation area in Pok Wai, Yuen Long (with photos)

A contractor who carried out illegal site formation works in a conservation area in Pok Wai, Yuen Long, and caused mud and dust dispersion which adversely affected the environment, was convicted today (February 12). The contractor, the land occupier and the construction worker concerned were fined a total of \$25,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today for contravening the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) and the Air Pollution Control (Construction Dust) Regulation.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that the department received a report last July from a member of the public that illegal site formation works were being conducted in a private lot in Pok Wai, Yuen Long. During the inspection, the EPD officers successfully intercepted a dump truck and an excavator, which were involved in soil dumping and bulldozing works at the lot concerned. The illegal works caused mud and dust dispersion which adversely affected the environment. After investigation and evidence gathering, the department subsequently initiated prosecution against the contractor, the land occupier and the construction worker concerned in accordance with the EIAO and the Regulation.

The spokesman said that the area concerned belongs to a conservation area under the Nam Sang Wai Outline Zoning Plan, which aims to preserve the ecological value and functions of existing fish ponds in the area. According to the EIAO, it is an offence to conduct earthworks at a conservation area without an environmental permit issued by the EPD. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and six months' imprisonment. In addition, according to the Regulation, site formation is classified as notifiable work and contractors are required to notify the EPD in accordance with the statutory requirements and adopt dust emission control measures. Anyone who fails to notify the EPD about site formation works commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$25,000. Anyone who conducts construction works without adopting the measures stipulated by the Regulation to prevent the dispersion of dust is liable to a fine of \$50,000.



Cluster of Influenza A cases in Yan Chai Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Yan Chai Hospital (YCH) made the following announcement today (February 12):

Three male patients (aged 55 to 61) in a medical ward and one staff member of YCH have presented with upper respiratory tract infection symptoms since February 4. Appropriate viral tests were arranged and the test results were positive for Influenza A. One of the patients was discharged upon recovery; one patient is being treated under isolation and is in a stable condition; and one of the three patients passed away due to his own underlying illness and Influenza A. The staff member concerned is currently on leave.

Admission to the ward has been suspended. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to the established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow up.

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".

Company fined for illegal club operation

A company was fined \$4,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (February 12) for contravening the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance.

The courts heard that in June last year, officers from the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department conducted an inspection at a club on Old Bailey Street in Central which had been operating with a certificate of compliance (CoC).

The OLA officers posed as customer and patronised the club for food without being asked to show their membership status or being invited to join the club as members. Condition 19 of the CoC was breached.

The company, being the CoC holder of the club, was charged with

contravening section 21(2) of the Ordinance.

A spokesman for the department reminded all CoC holders to comply with the conditions as stipulated therein. Enforcement action would continue to be taken against illegal club operations.

Cluster of Influenza A cases in Siu Lam Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Siu Lam Hospital made the following announcement today (February 12):

Four patients (aged 47 to 62) in a female ward for severe intellectual disability presented with respiratory symptoms since February 10. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients and their test results were positive for Influenza A. The patients concerned are being treated under isolation with stable condition.

Admission to the ward has been suspended and restricted visiting arrangements have been imposed. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.