
13 JULY 2016

**WOMAN SENTENCED TO HEAVY FINE FOR
UNLICENSED ESTATE AGENCY WORK**

A 41-year-old Singaporean woman was convicted in Court today for acting as an unlicensed estate agent in relation to a rental transaction involving a room in a HDB flat. Yee Jye Ying (余洁莹) was sentenced to pay a fine of \$16,000, in default six weeks' imprisonment. In sentencing Yee, the court also took into account one other charge of rental transaction of a HDB room.

2. Yee had facilitated and closed two room rental transactions involving two HDB flats and four male Bangladeshi immigrant offenders without being licensed by the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) to act as an estate agent in the rental transactions. Details of the case are listed in the Annex.

3. Yee had been investigated by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) for an offence under Section 57(B)(1) of the Immigration Act for assisting, encouraging, or inducing giving of shelter to immigration offenders in expectation of any fee, gain, or reward and was administered with a stern warning. ICA subsequently lodged a complaint to CEA against Yee.

CEA'S CHARGES AGAINST YEE JYE YING

4. Yee Jye Ying was convicted and sentenced in Court under the Estate Agents Act¹ (Cap. 95A) (EAA) for one charge under Section 28(1)(b) of the EAA,

¹ Under the Estate Agents Act (Cap. 95A), "estate agents" refer to estate agency businesses (sole-proprietors, partnerships, and companies) or individuals who do estate agency work. Estate agency businesses are commonly known as property agencies. "Salespersons" refer to individuals who perform estate agency work. They are commonly known as property agents.

for acting as an estate agent without first being licensed by CEA. Yee had assisted two Bangladeshi tenants in a room rental transaction between May 2013 and June 2013. Yee had arranged for the tenants to view a room in a HDB flat in Yishun, closed the room rental transaction for them and the flat owner, and received commission from both the flat owner and the tenants.

5. In sentencing Yee, the court took into account one other charge under 28(1)(b) of the EAA for acting as an estate agent without first being licensed by CEA to do so. In Aug 2013, Yee had assisted another two Bangladeshi tenants in a similar way to rent a room in another Yishun flat.

6. The punishment for each offence under Section 28(1)(b) of the EAA is a fine not exceeding \$75,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or both. In the case of a continuing offence, there is a further fine not exceeding \$7,500 for every day or part thereof during which the offence continues after conviction.

Advice to Consumers

7. We advise consumers who choose to have a property agent to assist them in their property transactions to engage only property agencies and property agents licensed and registered with CEA respectively. The public can verify whether an individual is licensed or registered with CEA via the [Public Register](#) on the CEA website. The public can report those who perform unlicensed estate agency work to CEA at 1800-6432555 or feedback@cea.gov.sg. [Useful information](#) on engaging a professional and effective property agency and agent is also available on our website.

About the Council for Estate Agencies

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) is a statutory board established in 2010 under the Estate Agents Act to regulate and promote the development of a professional and trusted real estate agency industry. The key responsibilities of

CEA are to license estate agents and register salespersons, promote the integrity and competence of estate agents and salespersons, and equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions in property transactions. For more information, please visit: www.cea.gov.sg.

About the Case

1. Prior to May 2013, Yee Jye Ying had pasted room rental advertisements at HDB blocks around her neighbourhood in Yishun. The advertisements had stated “room rental” with her name and contact number on cut-out slips.
2. In May 2013, a flat owner contacted Yee and engaged her as her agent to rent out one of the rooms in her HDB flat in Yishun. The owner preferred male tenants and wanted a monthly rental of \$500 to \$650, depending on the number of tenants. A few weeks later, Yee received a call from a Bangladeshi national who wanted to rent a room with his friend. The man claimed that he and his friend were work permit holders working at a shipyard.
3. On 9 June 2013, Yee arranged for the two Bangladeshi nationals to view the room that was available for rent in the owner’s flat. When they met, the two men each showed her a copy of a work permit issued by the Ministry of Manpower, but they bore other persons’ names. Yee then brought them to the flat and introduced them to the flat owner, who showed them the room available for rent.
4. Later the same day, Yee informed the flat owner that the two prospective tenants were interested to rent the room at \$600 a month and they wanted to move in immediately. Yee brought them back to the flat and prepared the tenancy agreement by referring to copies of the work permits that the Bangladeshis had earlier shown her. Both the flat owner and the Bangladeshis then signed the tenancy agreement. The tenancy was for the two to rent a room in the HDB flat from the flat owner for one year from 9 June 2013 to 9 June 2014, at a monthly rent of \$600. The tenants paid a \$900 deposit and the first month’s rent to the flat owner. Yee then collected a commission of \$300 each from the flat owner and the tenants.
5. In August 2013, Yee assisted another two Bangladeshi nationals to rent a room in another HDB flat in Yishun. Yee arranged the viewing of this HDB flat

for the Bangladeshis and closed the tenancy agreement for the two to rent the room in the HDB flat from the flat owner for a year from 6 August 2013 to 5 August 2014, at a monthly rent of \$600. Yee prepared the tenancy agreement for the room rental for the flat owner and the two tenants to sign. She received a rental commission of \$100 from the tenants and \$300 from the flat owner.

6. On 3 September 2013, ICA officers conducted checks on the two HDB flats where Yee had helped to lease out a room in each flat. The two pairs of Bangladeshi tenants turned out to be immigrant offenders in Singapore and were arrested for offences under the Immigration Act (Cap. 133). ICA subsequently lodged a complaint with CEA that Yee had handled two room rental transactions that involved four male Bangladeshi immigrant offenders.

7. Investigations revealed that Yee was not a licensed real estate agent and did not have the authority to carry out estate agency work. Under the Estate Agents Act, it is an offence for individuals to act as estate agents and salespersons in any property transactions if they are not licensed and registered by the CEA respectively.

8. Yee also did not carry out the due diligence checks that ICA requires of property agencies or property agents to perform when facilitating the rental of flats. These checks are stated in the Practice Guidelines in the Professional Service Manual issued by the CEA for property agencies and agents. They include checking the tenants' original immigration/work or other passes for forgery, cross-checking the particulars on the passes with the original passports, and checking the photographs with the actual persons. Property agents are also required to check with the Ministry of Manpower or employers on the validity of work permits.