

**Response to “Questionable handling of complaint against estate agent”
– ST Forum, 31 Mar 2015**

23 Apr 2015

Dear Editor

We refer to the letter “Questionable handling of complaint against estate agent” by Ms Catherine Cheong Wai Shan (31 Mar 2015), who had lodged a complaint with the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) against her salesperson for dual representation in a rental transaction.

2. CEA regulates the real estate agency industry by ensuring that estate agents and salespersons (commonly known as property agents) abide by the Estate Agents Act and adhere to a set of Practice Guidelines to safeguard consumer interests in their property transactions, and raise professionalism in the industry.

3. Under the Estate Agents Act, it is an offence for a salesperson to represent both the landlord and the tenant and collect commissions from both parties. CEA takes a firm and fair approach in investigating complaints. Upon receiving Ms Cheong’s feedback, we had sought information and verifications from the relevant parties for our investigation to determine if the salesperson received commission from more than one party. These included the estate agent responsible for the salesperson. Through our checks, there was insufficient evidence to indicate that the salesperson received commission from more than one party, hence we informed Ms Cheong that a case of dual representation could not be made out.

4. Ms Cheong also commented that CEA had advised her on how a salesperson could protect himself against complaints of dual representation. We would like to clarify that our reply on 3 Feb 2015 was in response to her specific query on 1 Feb 2015 on conflict of interest in the case of the salesperson’s duties after the tenancy agreement is signed and the property is handed over, and not about dual representation. We therefore explained to her how salespersons should disclose conflicts of interest.

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