

28 MAY 2012

**UPDATE ON CEA'S PROSECUTION CASE AGAINST
SIM SOON LEONG RAYMOND**

Unregistered Salesperson Sentenced to \$40,000 Fine under the Estate Agents Act

On 25 May 2012, Sim Soon Leong Raymond, was sentenced to a fine of \$40,000, or in default 8 weeks imprisonment, in respect of two property transactions.

About the Case

2. The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) has earlier charged Sim in Court on 20 October 2011. Sim was not registered with CEA and also did not have a written agreement with the estate agent for him to practise. Despite this, Sim advertised two HDB flats for rental on an online property portal under his name, while describing himself as a Sales Director of a licensed estate agent. He also represented clients in making offers, negotiated property transactions directly and conducted flat viewings.

3. Sim's offences were discovered when his clients lodged a complaint with CEA against him for impersonating a registered salesperson. Sim had assumed the identity of a bona fide registered salesperson of a licensed estate agent when he introduced himself to a couple who were interested in buying a HDB property. The latter checked the Public Register of Estate Agents and Salespersons on CEA's website and discovered that the photograph of the

named person shown on the Public Register record did not look the same as Sim. They filed a complaint with the Council and CEA's investigations found Sim to have violated the Estate Agents Act. He was the second unregistered salesperson to be charged in court by CEA and convicted. This case illustrates the importance of checking the identity of a salesperson on the Public Register before consumers engage any salesperson for his or her services.

Other Cases Involving Unregistered Salespersons

4. On 12 January 2012, the first unregistered salesperson to be prosecuted by CEA, Tan Cher Peng, was sentenced to a fine and jail term. There is one more prosecution involving an unregistered salesperson, Lim Beng Kwang, pending a further Court hearing on 21 June 2012. CEA will be prosecuting several more persons for doing estate agency work without being registered over the next few months.

5. CEA has introduced registration of salespersons to ensure that they fulfil the fit and proper criteria, possess the necessary knowledge to provide professional service to their clients, and adhere to ethical practices. For many Singaporeans, their home is the largest single investment they will ever make and many of them do property transactions through salespersons. If there are problems with the transaction or with the property, they may suffer losses and other consequences. Therefore, it is important that they be given the best possible advice and service in making such investment. The Estate Agents Act and Regulations impose requirements that registered salespersons have to comply with so as to ensure professional conduct and service in the industry.

Advice for Consumers

6. Consumers should only engage salespersons who are registered with CEA. They are advised to request for the salesperson's registration number, and verify that the salesperson is listed on CEA's Public Register at www.cea.gov.sg before engaging his or her services. The Public Register

allows consumers to search the particulars of a salesperson, using the salesperson's name, registration number or mobile number.

7. Consumers are also advised not to respond to any real estate agency flyer, leaflet or advertisement that does not provide a salesperson's details or registration number.

8. Consumers should report to CEA when they encounter any person not listed on the Public Register but carrying out estate agency work illegally. They can report the person to the CEA at 1800-6432555 or feedback@cea.gov.sg.
