

MEDIA UPDATE

12 JANUARY 2012

UPDATE ON CEA'S FIRST PROSECUTION CASE – TAN CHER PENG

First Person Sentenced to imprisonment & fines under the Estate Agents Act

Today, Tan Cher Peng, the first unregistered salesperson to be charged by CEA in Court, was sentenced to imprisonment of 1 month for a false declaration charge and an aggregate fine of \$32,000 (in default 16 weeks' imprisonment) for two instances of wrongful holding out as a salesperson and carrying out estate agency work. In one instance, relating to property advertisements, \$16,000 (comprising 2 fines of \$8,000 each) was imposed for holding out as a salesperson while being unregistered by CEA and unauthorised by an estate agent. In the other instance, relating to a property transaction, another \$16,000 (also comprising 2 fines of \$8,000 each) was imposed for carrying out estate agency work while being unregistered by CEA and unauthorised by an estate agent.

2. Currently, there are two more prosecutions involving unregistered salespersons pending before the Courts. The cases involving Sim Soon Leong, Raymond and Lim Beng Kwang are scheduled for Pre-Trial Conferences on 13 January 2012 and 16 February 2012 respectively. CEA will be prosecuting several more persons for doing estate agency work without being registered over the next few months.

3. 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

4. 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 has been enhanced to allow consumers to search the particulars of a salesperson, using the salesperson's mobile number. This is in addition to current search options using the salesperson's name or registration number.

5. 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.

6. 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.