
3 April 2019

Man convicted and fined \$72,000 for unregistered estate agency work

A man was convicted in Court today for nine charges of holding himself out to the public as being a property agent without being registered as such with the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA). Lim Ruiwen, 31, had posted nine advertisements for the rental of HDB and private properties on publicly accessible online property portals between January and March 2017, despite being unregistered.

2 Lim was sentenced to a fine totalling \$72,000, in default of 27 weeks' imprisonment. In sentencing Lim, the Court also took into consideration 43 other similar charges of Lim holding out as a property agent to the public when he was not a registered agent.

3 Under the Estate Agents Act¹ (EAA), it is an offence for entities and/or individuals to act or hold out as estate agents and/or salespersons in any property transaction if they are not licensed or registered with the CEA.

CEA's charges against Lim Ruiwen

4 Lim pleaded guilty and was convicted in Court for a total of nine charges under Section 29(1)(a) of the EAA for holding himself out to the public as a salesperson for Global Alliance Property Pte Ltd, without being registered as a salesperson.

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.

5 Lim was a former agent since January 2011, and was most recently with Global Alliance between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016. Lim's registration expired after 31 December 2016 as he did not submit an application to CEA through a property agency to renew his registration² as a property agent for 2017. He was also terminated by Global Alliance after 31 December 2016. He was therefore no longer a registered agent after 31 December 2016.

6 The nine charges were in relation to advertisements that Lim had posted online. Investigations revealed that between January 2017 and March 2017, Lim had posted nine advertisements, each advertising a different HDB or private property for rent, on an online property portal.

7 In all the advertisements, Lim held himself out as a registered agent of Global Alliance when he was not. The advertisements included his name, photograph, mobile number, previous CEA registration number, as well as Global Alliance's name and CEA licence number.

8 In sentencing Lim, the Court took into consideration 43 other similar charges of Lim holding himself out as a property agent without being registered when he posted 43 advertisements on other publicly accessible property portals to advertise the lease of 43 other HDB and private properties.

9 The punishment for an offence under Section 29(1)(a) of the EAA is a fine not exceeding \$25,000, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.

Advice to consumers

10 Consumers who choose to have a property agent to assist them in their property transactions should only engage property agencies and agents who are licensed and registered with the CEA respectively. The public can verify whether an

² Under the Estate Agents Act (Cap. 95A), property agencies are required to renew their licence and agents are required to renew their registration through a property agency in the current year in order to carry out estate agency work in the following year.

entity or individual is licensed or registered with the CEA via the [Public Register](#) on the CEA website.

11 The public can report those who perform unlicensed estate agency work or are unregistered agents to the CEA at 1800-6432555 or feedback@cea.gov.sg. Consumers can visit www.cea.gov.sg/happyconsumer for more information on engaging a professional and effective property agency and agent, and for tips to work harmoniously with a property agent for their property transaction.

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