

July 2022

Property Fraud (2)

Recently, a criminal syndicate was found using forged Power of Attorney and Provisional Agreement for Sale and Purchase to impersonate as the attorney of the owner of two vacant properties, and sold the properties to their company with the intention to obtain mortgage loans and properties' title. The Hong Kong Police Force (The Police) also revealed that the criminal syndicate had changed the payer's particulars of the demand notes for rates and/or Government rent of at least forty properties without owners' consent, which facilitated the fraudster to impersonate as the authorised representative of the property owner to defraud properties' title in the future. The Police on 11 July 2022 arrested 4 people for attempted fraud. The Land Registry (LR) reminds all property owners, especially owners with vacant properties, to closely monitor their status of properties to avoid suffering from loss.

The LR remind the public to keep the following points from the Police in mind:

- Owners of vacant properties should regularly visit and check their properties.
- If there is an unauthorized change of payer's particulars in the demand notes for rates and/or Government rent, water, electricity and gas bill, check with the relevant authorities/ companies and report the suspicious cases to the Police as soon as possible.
- Property owners may subscribe the Land Registry's [Property Alert](#) service so that they will receive an email alert whenever there is any instrument lodged for registration against their properties, thus helping them to stay vigilant of what is happening to their properties.



Please click here [[Hong Kong Police Facebook](#)] to view the Police's press conference on the case for details.

September 2021

Property Fraud (1)

In view of a recent property deception case in which a criminal syndicate was found to have impersonated as owners of idle properties and either mortgaged the property to financial companies for loans or sold the properties, the Land Registry (LR) advises all property owners to stay vigilant of what is happening to their properties so as to avoid becoming a victim of property fraud.

The Hong Kong Police Force (The Police) had in a press conference on property deception case held on 2 September 2021 said that they received a report from the Urban Renewal Authority on suspicion of someone had usurped over an idled property at the end of 2020. After in-depth investigation, it was found that at least eight properties were found usurped with similar modus operandi. The investigation of the Police showed that the criminal syndicate mainly targeted those long-term vacant properties with relatively high age and mortgage free. Between May 2020 and March 2021, the syndicate had committed fraud over eight vacant properties by impersonating as owners of the properties using forged identity cards and then either mortgaged the properties to financial companies for loans or sold the properties, earning a total of HK\$62.7 million. On 1 September 2021, the Police arrested 12 people including barrister, solicitors and staff members of estate agents and financial companies for conspiracy to defraud.

To minimize the chance of becoming a victim of property fraud, the LR remind the public to keep the following points from the Police in mind:

- Conduct onsite inspection prior to property transaction. Beware of those properties listed below market price.
- Entrust a reputable solicitors' firm to authenticate the identity of the parties involved when conducting a property transaction.
- Owners of vacant properties should regularly visit and check their properties.
- Property owners may subscribe the Land Registry's [Property Alert](#) service so that they will receive an email alert whenever there is any instrument lodged for registration against their properties, thus helping them to stay vigilant of what is happening to their properties.
- Call Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) of the Police's 24 hours "Anti-Scam Helpline 18222" for assistance in response to suspicious deception cases.
- Visit the [ADCC's website](#) of the Police for the latest modus operandi of deception and scam alerts.

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