

# Ex-HDB worker jailed 9 months for taking bribes

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A former Housing Board clerk-of-works, who obtained bribes more than 22 years ago in return for being lenient in his supervision of a construction project, was jailed for nine months yesterday.

Soh Chor Huang, 65, was also

ordered to pay a penalty of \$24,800, the total amount of bribes he received for 11 months in 1994.

He admitted to five counts of receiving \$2,400 between March and July 1994 from Mr Chang Chan Nam and Mr Peck Chin Choon of Chang Choon Huat Construction (CCH) as an inducement to be lenient in his supervision of CCH's installation of HDB carpark barriers.

The court heard that CCH was incorporated in 1993 by Mr Chang, Mr Peck and Soh's brother-in-law, Mr Goh Teck Seng.

CCH began work in late 1993 on an HDB project to erect barriers to parapets of multi-storey carparks, with Soh assigned as the clerk-of-works.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Jasmin Kaur said Soh had planned with Mr

Chang and Mr Peck for him to receive the bribe as a "monthly salary".

A government servant, Soh did not want his name to be registered in the company. He asked his brother-in-law, Mr Goh, to register instead. Mr Goh agreed, but did not get involved in the company in any other way.

Between January and November 1994, directors' salaries were paid

to Mr Chang, Mr Peck and Mr Goh. Twenty per cent of the salaries were credited into their respective Central Provident Fund (CPF) accounts, and the remaining paid in cash or by cheque.

For Mr Goh's salary, 20 per cent was credited into his CPF account, and the remaining 80 per cent went to Soh.

The prosecution said Soh was supposed to supervise and ensure the works followed HDB guidelines.

Soh had noticed on some occasions that CCH neither used HDB-approved materials for installing some of the barriers, nor ob-

tained HDB's permission to use other materials. He did not report these facts to HDB and allowed the works to carry on.

Soh's lawyer, Mr Kelvin Lim, said in his mitigation plea that since the case came to light, Soh's health had deteriorated from the anxiety and uncertainty of the matter. "Perhaps the greatest pain (Soh) has had to endure is the fact that he has brought shame to his family," he said.

Soh could have been fined up to \$100,000 and jailed for up to five years on each charge.

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