

Hong Kong Customs detects case of precious metals and stones dealer carrying out specified transaction without registration

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (December 4) detected a case involving a local company that conducted a gold transaction valued at over HK\$120,000 without registration under the Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones Regulatory Regime. The investigation is ongoing.

According to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615), the Regime came into effect on April 1, 2023. Any person who is seeking to carry on a business of dealing in precious metals and stones in Hong Kong and engage in any transaction(s) (whether making or receiving a payment) with a total value at or above HK\$120,000 in Hong Kong is required to register with the Commissioner of Customs and Excise. Any dealer, other than a registrant, who claims to be a registrant, claims to be authorised to carry out, or carries out any cash or non-cash transaction(s) with a total value at or above HK\$120,000 is liable to a maximum fine of HK\$100,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Hong Kong Customs reminds all dealers that the transitional period for registration under the Regime has ended. Any dealers in precious metals and stones must obtain the relevant registration before they can carry out any cash or non-cash transaction(s) with a total value at or above HK\$120,000.

For the forms, procedures and guidelines to submit applications for registration, please visit the website for Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones Registration System (www.drs.customs.gov.hk) or Hong Kong Customs' webpage (www.customs.gov.hk/en/service-enforcement-information/anti-money-laundering/supervision-of-dealers-in-precious-metals-and-ston/index.html).

Members of the public may report any suspected transactions involving precious metals and stones with a total value at or above HK\$120,000 conducted without the required registration to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

Expansion of Suspicious Account Alert

for automated teller machine transactions

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) and the Hong Kong Association of Banks (HKAB), announced today (December 5) the expansion of the Suspicious Account Alert to include transactions at automated teller machines (ATMs) (including cash deposit machines). Starting from December 8, 2024, 22 participating banks (see the list at Annex) will gradually implement the alert mechanism at their ATMs, and provide their customers with detailed information on the implementation.

The scope of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism, which is expanded to include transfers conducted at ATMs (including real-time same bank transfers and inter-bank transfers, as well as cash deposits), will cover the majority of the public's day-to-day transfers. Whenever a customer conducts a funds transfer or cash deposit at a bank branch or an ATM, or via online banking, if the recipient's account number, mobile phone number, email address or Faster Payment System (FPS) Identifier is labelled as "High Risk" in the Police's Scameter, a scam and pitfall search engine, the customer will receive an alert to the associated fraud risk before confirming the transaction.

The alert mechanism was first introduced in November last year, with the first phase covering funds transfers using FPS proxy IDs. The alert mechanism was further expanded in August this year to cover internet banking and physical branch transactions. When customers initiate a bank transfer, banks will issue high risk alerts to customers based on data from the Scameter. In the third quarter of this year, banks issued over 24 000 alerts (Note), which reminded customers not to proceed with the high-risk transactions in a timely manner.

The HKMA reminds the public to carefully verify the payment details and the payee's identity before proceeding with a transaction. If in doubt, the public should immediately terminate the transaction. The HKMA will continue to work closely with the Police and the banking industry to assess the effectiveness of anti-fraud measures and actively combat digital scams.

Note: Based on data provided by the 35 participating banks (which offer FPS, internet banking and physical branch services) of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism.

Departure statement by Secretary for Transport and Logistics

â€‹The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, today (December 5) made the following statement on his departure:

I joined the Government to serve the community in 1983 and became a politically appointee in 2022. During this period, I served Hong Kong in various positions, and this has been the greatest honour of my life.

I am grateful for the trust of the Central Government and the support of the Chief Executive, as well as the help from my colleagues in the Government and friends in the industry over the years. It has been a privilege to work alongside all of you during this time, and I am honoured to complete my 40-year public service career as the Secretary for Transport and Logistics.

I wish the new Secretary all the best and firmly believe that the civil service team will continue to support her work and to propel the development of Hong Kong's transport and logistics sectors together.

Departure statement by Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, today (December 5) made the following statement on his departure:

I am honoured to have served as the first Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism since July 1, 2022. Knowing that I was charged with a heavy responsibility, I dedicated myself during the two and a half years in service. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all colleagues in the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau for fighting side by side with me. I am also grateful for the support from members of the political team. I believe that the newly appointed Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, will continue to committing to the duties with her team, striving for the betterment and development of Hong Kong's future.

I am indebted to all colleagues, industry stakeholders and the media for their support throughout my service in the last 10 years or so.

Government announces appointment and removal of Principal Officials (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, announced today (December 5) that in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law, the Central People's Government, upon his nomination and recommendation, approved the appointment of Ms Mable Chan as the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Miss Rosanna Law Shuk-pui as the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, and the removal of Mr Kevin Yeung from the post of Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, and Mr Lam Sai-hung from the post of Secretary for Transport and Logistics.

"Mr Yeung and Mr Lam have served Hong Kong and the Government with integrity and dedication over the years. I would like to extend my thanks for their contributions and I wish them all the best after leaving government service," the Chief Executive said.

On the appointment of Ms Chan and Miss Law, the Chief Executive said, "They are seasoned Administrative Officers and have had a distinguished performance in the Government over the past 35 years, possessing proven administrative and management skills, leadership skills, explanatory skills and proactivity. I am confident that they would lead their respective policy bureaux and spare no effort in serving the community and contributing to Hong Kong."

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Following are the biographical notes on Ms Chan and Miss Law:

Ms Mable Chan

Ms Chan joined the Administrative Service in July 1989 and rose to the rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 in April 2022. She has served in various bureaux and departments, including the former City and New Territories Administration, the former Planning, Environment and Lands Branch, the former New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office, the former Chief Secretary's Office, the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, the former Constitutional Affairs Bureau, the former Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau, the former Education and Manpower Bureau, the Education Bureau as well as the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau. She was Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services) from August 2016 to October 2017, Commissioner for Transport from October 2017 to July 2020, Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) from August 2020 to June 2022 and has been serving as Permanent Secretary for Transport and Logistics since July 2022.

Miss Rosanna Law Shuk-pui

Miss Law joined the Government in July 1989. She served in the Labour Officer and Trade Officer Grades before joining the Administrative Service in July 1990, rising to the rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade A in April 2022. She has served in various bureaux and departments, including the former Civil Service Branch, the former City and New Territories Administration, the former Constitutional Affairs Branch, the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, the former Trade Department and the former Environment, Transport and Works Bureau. She was Deputy Commissioner for Tourism from August 2010 to September 2016, Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs from September 2016 to September 2020, Commissioner for Transport from September 2020 to August 2023 and has been serving as Permanent Secretary for Housing/Director of Housing from August 2023.

