

# Cannabis seized by Hong Kong Customs at airport surges in second half of this year (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs has stepped up enforcement against the illegal import of cannabis through air cargo and parcels. The quantity and market value of cannabis seized at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) have increased by more than 120 per cent when compared with those of last year. In the second half of this year, the seizure amount and market value have surged by 200 per cent and 100 per cent respectively when compared with those of the first half of this year. In terms of the number of cases, seizure amount and market value, as of today, the figures have all surpassed the records of last year. In respect of the age of the arrested persons, about one quarter were aged 18 or below.

As at November 9, statistics revealed that Customs has detected 107 cases involving cannabis or products containing cannabis at HKIA this year, with a seizure amount of over 500 kilograms worth more than \$68 million. Among them, 44 cases were detected after July 1 while more than 380kg of suspected cannabis and products suspected of containing cannabis were seized, with an estimated market value of over \$45 million.

The suspected cannabis seized, including cannabis buds, herbal cannabis and cannabis resin, weighed about 480kg. About 24kg of products suspected of containing cannabis were also seized, including candies, foodstuffs, drinks and cannabis oil.

Different concealment methods have been adopted, including the use of speakers, coffee machines, carpets, clothes and chessboards as cover-ups to evade Customs' attention.

After in-depth follow-up investigations, Customs has arrested 22 men and four women, aged between 15 and 73. Among them, seven were aged 18 or below. Seven out of the 26 arrested persons have declared themselves as students.

The arrests of the seven persons aged 18 or below were made in the second half of this year, indicating an upward trend of offenders in that age group.

Since individual overseas jurisdictions have legalised recreational and medical use of cannabis in recent years, it has become easier for members of the public to purchase products containing cannabis or controlled cannabinoids (such as tetrahydro-cannabinol, or THC) on the Internet. Customs believes this has caused an increase in the number of relevant cases.

Last year, Customs detected a total of 101 cases by air cargo and parcel channels resulting in seizures of about 221kg of suspected cannabis and products suspected of containing cannabis worth about \$30 million.

Customs reminds members of the public that they should pay attention to the packaging labels of the products concerned to check whether they contain cannabis while making purchases on the Internet, especially through online platforms in different areas, so as to avoid breaching the law inadvertently.

Customs also reminds the public to stay alert and not to participate in drug trafficking activities for monetary returns. They must not accept hiring or delegation from another party to carry controlled items into and out of Hong Kong. They are also reminded not to carry unknown items for other people, nor to release their personal data or home address to others for receiving parcels or goods.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment. It will also lead to a criminal record that would exert a considerable impact on teenagers' further education as well as other aspects.

Customs has all along strived to combat dangerous drugs trafficking through risk assessment and intelligence analysis. The department also closely monitors the smuggling trend of different kinds of drugs and arranges corresponding deployment and enforcement action. Customs will continue to maintain close contact with Hongkong Post and the logistics industries to step up action against drug trafficking through postal parcels or express courier channels.

Under the Ordinance, cannabis and THC are classified as dangerous drugs. Importation of products (including food or drinks) containing cannabis or THC into Hong Kong is an offence unless the relevant provisions in the Ordinance are complied with.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



