

[DH continues interdepartmental operation against distribution of smoking product advertisements in public housing estates \(with photos\)](#)

To step up enforcement actions against the distribution of smoking product leaflets in public housing estates, the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) of the Department of Health (DH) has carried out joint operations with the Police and Housing Department (HD) in a total of 21 public housing estates in various districts across Hong Kong since January this year. Four joint operations have also been conducted with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) in February to combat the sale of illicit cigarettes and related promotional activities in public housing estates. TACO today (February 26) continued to carry out relevant joint operations with the HD and the C&ED, during which officers conducted patrols at a public housing estate in Kowloon Bay, and provided estate security personnel and residents with information on what to do when a suspected violation is found.

In accordance with the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371) (the Ordinance), no person shall distribute any smoking product advertisement (including any promotion leaflets). Any person who contravenes the regulation is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000. TACO will continue to carry out relevant interdepartmental operations, and follow up and investigate every complaint regarding the distribution of smoking product advertisements, as well as to refer any suspected cases of illicit cigarettes that involve violations of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109) to the relevant department for further investigation.

TACO, the Police and the HD have established a co-operation mechanism targeting the distribution of smoking product leaflets in public housing estates. When any smoking product leaflet distribution is detected at public housing estates, the housing estate staff will contact the Police for assistance and subsequently refer the case to TACO for further investigation. Since 2021, TACO has successfully prosecuted 12 offenders (involved in 13 cases) for distributing smoking product leaflets. The highest penalty for these convicted cases was a fine of \$8,000.

A spokesman for the DH stressed that the department has always been closely monitoring and taking stringent enforcement actions against violations of the Ordinance (including the distribution of smoking product advertisements). The spokesman reiterated that all tobacco products, regardless of whether they are duty paid or not, pose significant health risks. Smokers should quit smoking as early as possible for their own health and that of others. Information on smoking cessation can also be obtained from www.livetobaccofree.hk.

