

[Fitness centre salesperson imprisoned for conspiracy to engage in aggressive commercial practices](#)

A saleslady of a fitness centre was sentenced to 13 months' imprisonment today (March 31) after earlier conviction of conspiracy to engage in aggressive commercial practices in the course of selling fitness services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts. She was also ordered by the court to pay compensation of about \$2,000 to the victim of the case.

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that staff members of a fitness centre in Kowloon Bay were suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices when selling fitness services, and coercing a customer to procure fitness membership and personal fitness trainer contracts.

After an investigation, it was revealed that the salespersons of the fitness centre asked a customer to sign a form to check whether there were any promotional offers available. The customer was told that no payment was needed. After the customer had signed the form, the saleslady involved in the case immediately revealed that the form was a fitness membership contract. Later, she pressured the victim to purchase an extra personal fitness trainer contract and pay for the contracts by means of credit card and autopay.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers are also reminded to procure services from reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair the consumer's freedom of choice or conduct in relation to the product concerned, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).