

[Hong Kong Customs and Marine Police detect cigarette smuggling case in joint operation \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs and the Marine Police conducted a joint operation yesterday (November 23) in the waters near Lantau Island and seized about 2.9 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$10.73 million and a duty potential of about \$7.25 million.

During the joint anti-smuggling operation conducted near Lantau Island early in the morning yesterday, Customs officers and Police officers spotted a suspicious speedboat with three suspicious men and boxes of goods loaded on board heading from the east of Cheung Chau to Lantau Island. Enforcement officers immediately took action. During the chase, officers found that some of the boxes were thrown into the sea by the men. The speedboat finally ran aground at a seashore at Tai Long Wan of Lantau Island. The three suspicious men abandoned the speedboat and fled. A total of 290 boxes of goods wrapped in plastic bags which contained about 2.9 million suspected illicit cigarettes were found on the speedboat and the waters nearby. The speedboat was also detained for further investigation.

An investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Customs reminds members of the public that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

