

Hong Kong Customs and Marine Police detect cigarette smuggling case in joint operation (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs and Marine Police conducted a joint operation in Sai Kung yesterday (September 21) and seized about 2.2 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$8.2 million and a duty potential of about \$5.6 million.

During the joint anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted at a pier in Tsam Chuk Wan, Sai Kung, yesterday early morning, Customs officers and Police officers discovered that several suspicious persons were transporting a large number of cartons from two speedboats to a lorry at the shore, and were suspected of participating in smuggling activities.

Law enforcement officers immediately took action, and the above-mentioned persons quickly boarded one of the speedboats and fled at high speed. Subsequently, the law enforcement officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes at the shore and detained the lorry and speedboat suspected to be involved in the case.

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).

