

Hong Kong Customs arrests man suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices for selling training and consultation services on dating techniques

Hong Kong Customs today (April 20) arrested a man suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices for making misleading omission and using aggressive commercial practices in the sale of training and consultation services on dating techniques, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a man was suspected of omitting material information in the sale of training and consultation services on dating techniques. The man demanded a victim to purchase an additional image transformation service at \$100,000 after receiving the membership fee from the victim. Otherwise, he would refuse to give lessons.

Also, he was suspected of forcing the victim to purchase the image transformation service through the use of coercion by broadcasting a video of the victim on the Internet.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 32-year-old male suspected to be in connection with the case.

An investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information or provides material information in a manner that is unclear, unintelligible, ambiguous or untimely, and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision, commits an offence of misleading omissions.

Also, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair a consumer's freedom of choice or conduct, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision.

The maximum penalty upon conviction for each above-mentioned offence is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email

account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).