

Hong Kong Customs combats illicit cigarettes activities (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (August 23) stepped up enforcement action against illicit cigarette activities across the territory. Apart from the detection of three incoming cargo and passenger cases at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Control Point and the Hong Kong International Airport, a mobile distribution den in Yau Tong was also smashed.

During the operation, about 690 000 suspected illicit cigarettes and 38 000 suspected illicit heat-not-burn products with a total estimated market value of about \$2 million and a duty potential of about \$1.4 million were seized.

Six men aged from 30 to 64 were arrested, including two buyers who were caught in Kowloon City and Kwun Tong.

A cross-boundary truck has also been detained.

Investigation is on-going.

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.

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 are particularly reminded that both the selling and buying of illicit cigarettes are illegal. Hong Kong Customs will continue to step up enforcement efforts against illicit cigarette activities at the control points and within the in-town area.

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).

