

Hong Kong Customs combats online sale of counterfeit perfume and cosmetics products (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs on September 29 conducted an enforcement operation to combat the online sale of counterfeit perfume and cosmetics products with seizures of about 1 300 items of suspected counterfeit products with an estimated market value of about \$360,000. A woman was arrested.

Customs earlier received information alleging that suspected counterfeit perfume had been put on sale through an online platform. Customs officers then posed as customers and conducted test-purchases online. After an in-depth investigation and with the assistance of the trademark owners, Customs officers took action on September 29 and met an online seller in Diamond Hill to make a deal. Two bottles of suspected counterfeit perfume and a suspected counterfeit lipstick were seized from her. The 33-year-old woman was then arrested.

Customs officers later searched the arrested woman's home unit in Sha Tin and an industrial unit in San Po Kong and further seized a batch of about 1 300 items of suspected counterfeit perfume and cosmetics products.

An investigation is ongoing. Customs is looking into the source of the suspected counterfeit goods involved in the case and samples will be sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

Customs reminds consumers to purchase goods at reputable shops or online shops and to avoid conducting transactions with suspicious online shops. They should check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs has been striving to protect consumer rights and carries out inspections in the market and on the Internet from time to time. Moreover, Customs officers made use of a big-data analytics system to conduct risk assessments and analyses to verify whether online shops complied with the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO) with a view to safeguarding the interests of consumers while making online purchases.

Under the TDO, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

