

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

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (June 6) detected a case involving online sale of counterfeit perfume and cosmetics, and seized about 1 500 items of suspected counterfeit products with an estimated market value of about \$680,000. A woman was arrested.

Customs earlier carried out cyber patrols and made use of a big-data analytics system to conduct risk assessments and analyses. It was found that suspected counterfeit perfume and cosmetics had been put on sale at an online shop opened via a social media 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 yesterday and met a female seller of the online shop in Tuen Mun to make a deal. One bottle of suspected counterfeit perfume was seized and the 26-year-old woman was then arrested.

Customs officers later escorted the arrested woman to an industrial unit in Tuen Mun, where a search was carried out and a batch of about 1 500 items of suspected counterfeit perfume and cosmetics were further seized.

An investigation is ongoing and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out. Also, 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 customers to purchase goods at reputable shops or online shops, and to avoid conducting transactions with suspicious online shops. Customers 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 infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



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