

Hong Kong Customs combats provision of infringing karaoke songs by party rooms in course of business (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a territory-wide enforcement operation codenamed "Magpie" between December 9 and yesterday (December 20) to combat illegal activities involving party room operators providing infringing karaoke songs to customers in the course of business.

Through intelligence analysis and with the assistance of copyright owners, Customs earlier identified a number of party rooms suspected of possessing and providing infringing karaoke songs to customers in the course of business. Customs officers then took enforcement action and raided 15 party rooms in various districts, including Tuen Mun, Kwai Chung, Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay. A total of 16 sets of karaoke devices used for playing suspected infringing songs, one set of game console with suspected pirated electronic games, and a batch of audio and video equipment were seized. The total estimated market value is approximately \$400,000. Three men aged between 31 and 40, were arrested for being suspected of contravening the Copyright Ordinance. They were all persons-in-charge of the party rooms. The investigation is ongoing and further arrest may be made.

Customs reminds business operators to comply with the Copyright Ordinance and to make enquiries to copyright owners on matters relating to the use of musical visual recordings in the course of business.

Customs will continue to step up inspection and enforcement to vigorously combat different kinds of infringing activities to safeguard the rights of copyright owners.

Under the Ordinance, any person, who without the licence of the copyright owner of a copyright work, possesses infringing copies of a copyright work for the purpose of, or in the course of, any trade or business with the view to it being used by any person commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

