

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

Hong Kong Customs conducted an enforcement operation codenamed "Magpie" in various districts between December 5 and 20 to combat illegal activities involving party room operators providing infringing karaoke songs to customers in the course of business. A total of seven sets of karaoke players used for playing suspected infringing songs, one set of a game console with suspected pirated electronic games, and a batch of televisions and audio and video equipment were seized. The total estimated market value is approximately \$150,000.

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 seven party rooms in Kwun Tong, Tuen Mun, Lai Chi Kok and Kwai Chung where the batch of suspected infringing items and relevant equipment were seized.

During the operation, three men and two women, aged between 25 and 41, were arrested for being suspected of contravening the Copyright Ordinance. Four of them are persons-in-charge while the other is a staff member. An investigation is ongoing and the five arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds business operators to comply with the 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 in order 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 a 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 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

