

Hong Kong Customs combats sale of counterfeit medicines (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (April 8) mounted an operation in Yau Ma Tei and Tuen Mun to combat the sale of counterfeit medicines. A total of about 1 000 capsules and about 360 millilitres of four types of suspected counterfeit medicines with an estimated market value of about \$14,000 were seized. One type was a suspected controlled medicine as well. Three persons were arrested.

Customs earlier received information alleging that suspected counterfeit medicines and suspected controlled medicines were being sold at some dispensaries. Customs officers yesterday took enforcement action after an in-depth investigation with the assistance of trademark owners. Two dispensaries located in Yau Ma Tei and Tuen Mun were raided and the batch of suspected counterfeit medicines and suspected controlled medicines was seized.

During the operation, two male directors and a salesman, aged between 42 and 69, were arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs appeals to consumers to make purchases at shops with a good reputation and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs also reminds traders to be cautious and prudent in merchandising since selling counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, 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.

Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, any person who sells any poison included in Part 1 of the Poisons List other than in accordance with provisions commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for two years.

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

