

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

Hong Kong Customs mounted an operation in Sheung Shui to combat the sale of counterfeit medicines on December 13. A total of about 51 000 pills and 22 litres of suspected counterfeit medicines as well as 68 000 pills of suspected controlled medicines with an estimated market value of about \$1 million were seized.

Customs officers earlier conducted patrols and found suspected counterfeit medicines being sold at a dispensary in Sheung Shui. After an in-depth investigation with the assistance of trademark owners, Customs officers took enforcement action on December 13 and raided the dispensary and its two storage premises, seizing the batch of suspected counterfeit medicines and suspected controlled medicines.

During the operation, two salesmen of the dispensary, aged 22 and 49, were arrested.

Investigation is ongoing. The arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs will continue to take stringent law enforcement and maintain close contact with relevant trademark owners, government departments and organisations, as well as keep track of the market closely, so as to combat counterfeit medicine activities.

Customs reminds traders that selling counterfeit medicine is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal liability.

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 possesses 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 infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

