

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at foreign domestic helper agency

Hong Kong Customs today (November 23) arrested a male director cum salesperson of a domestic helper agency suspected of having applied false trade descriptions to the employment services supplied and having wrongly accepted payment, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that staff member of a domestic helper agency had made false claims to customers on the application progress for employment of a domestic helper and its licence status in the provision of employment agency service. After accepting payment, the domestic helper agency suddenly closed down and failed to provide employment agency service as well as return the payment to customer.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 52-year-old man.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer commits an offence. Trader also commits an offence if at the time of acceptance of payment, the trader intends not to supply the product or intends to supply a materially different product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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