

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at travel agent

Hong Kong Customs today (November 16) arrested a female salesperson of a travel agent suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices involving bait and switch in the sale of travel services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a travel agent had in the course of sale of travel services invited a customer to purchase an air ticket voucher at a discounted price. When the customer redeemed the voucher, the travel agent refused to provide an air ticket. The customer was allowed to use the voucher only when a more expensive air ticket and hotel package was purchased.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 37-year-old woman. The arrested woman 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 offers a service for purchase at a specified price but subsequently, with the intention of promoting a different service, refuses to deliver the service within a reasonable time commits an offence. 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 its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).