

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices by renovation company

Hong Kong Customs today (August 16) arrested a female owner cum salesperson of a renovation company for suspected unfair trade practices of making a misleading omission and applying false trade descriptions, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a renovation company owner cum salesperson promised her customer to lay floor tiles for the whole flat, but omitted that a specified area would not be included. She was also alleged to have applied false claims to a customer that furniture of required dimensions would be tailor-made. However, significant gaps from those specified in the contract were found upon the completion of the renovation service.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 38-year-old woman. An investigation is ongoing.

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 engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information or provides material information in a manner that is unclear, unintelligible, ambiguous or untimely, and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision; or applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer 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 violation of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).