

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices by renovation company

Hong Kong Customs today (November 11) arrested two men for suspected unfair trade practices of making misleading omissions and applying false trade descriptions in the course of selling renovation services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a male agent of a renovation company failed to disclose his agency role and agency fee to a customer in the sale of renovation service and misled the customer to procure a renovation service by hiding the commercial intent.

Also, a salesman of the renovation company was suspected of failing to provide material information to the customer in the course of selling the renovation service and omitting that there was an additional charge for a renovation item stated in the contract. He was also suspected of applying a false claim to another renovation item that it would be completed according to the design designated by the customer. However, significant deviations from the designated design were found upon the completion of the renovation item.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested two men aged 38 and 39. 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, or fails to identify its commercial intent, 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).