

Hong Kong Customs conducts series of enforcement actions against traders suspected of selling or supplying consumer goods violating Consumer Goods Safety Regulation

Hong Kong Customs in April last year conducted an enforcement operation against a chain retailing group for selling suspected law-breaking personal care and household cleaning products. About 500 reports were received afterwards alleging that the goods sold by a number of retailers in the market failed to bear Chinese and English bilingual warnings or cautions in the product information marked on the packages and were suspected to be in contravention of the Consumer Goods Safety Regulation (CGSR), a subsidiary legislation of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance.

Customs officers have taken appropriate enforcement action after examining the relevant information of each report. During the investigation process spanning more than six months, the officers successfully test-purchased consumer goods suspected to be in contravention of the law from dozens of retailers in various districts. It was found that 60 models of products lacked warnings or cautions in both Chinese and English languages in respect of their safe keeping, use, consumption or disposal, and were suspected to have violated the CGSR.

In a series of enforcement actions, Customs launched investigations into about 90 traders (including chain retailing groups, retailers, suppliers and importers) and ordered the traders concerned to store about 19 000 items of 60 models of suspected law-breaking products at designated premises for further investigation. Those 60 models involved various types of products, including hand sanitiser, surgical masks, skincare products, personal care products, household cleaning products, clothing mist, laundry balls and deodorant as well as the five models of products referred by a related organisation to Customs recently.

Follow-up investigations of all cases are ongoing.

Under the CGSR, where consumer goods or their packages are marked with warnings or cautions with respect to their safe keeping, use, consumption or disposal, such warnings or cautions shall be in both English and Chinese languages. Moreover, the warning or caution phrases must be legibly and conspicuously shown on the goods, any package of the goods, a label securely affixed to the package or a document enclosed in the package. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on subsequent conviction.

Members of the public with information relating to unsafe or law-breaking consumer goods may make a report via Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).