

Hong Kong Customs detects five dangerous drugs cases at airport and seizes suspected dangerous drugs worth about \$20 million (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs detected five dangerous drugs cases, in which local freight consolidators were being exploited, at Hong Kong International Airport between end-July and mid-October this year and seized about 29 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine and about 12kg of suspected cannabis buds with a total estimated market value of about \$20 million. Three men suspected to be connected with the cases were arrested. Customs revealed that the drug traffickers attempted to deliver consignments with dangerous drugs concealed inside to different freight consolidators to evade Customs detection.

In the first case, through risk assessment, Customs on July 31 inspected an air cargo consignment, declared as carrying facial masks, arriving in Hong Kong from Thailand at the airport. The consignee address was a freight consolidator in Sham Shui Po. Upon inspection, Customs officers found that the batch of about 270 packs of facial masks were infused with about 13kg of suspected methamphetamine.

In the second case, through risk assessment, Customs on October 3 inspected five air cargoes, declared as carrying printers and guitar tuners, arriving in Hong Kong from the United States. About 12kg of suspected methamphetamine were found concealed inside two printers and three speakers. The consignee address was a freight consolidator in Hung Hom. After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers on October 8 arrested three men, aged between 40 and 41, suspected to be connected with the case in Hung Hom and North Point. The trio were suspected of arranging to collect one of the five cargoes which had about 3kg of suspected methamphetamine concealed inside.

Meanwhile, Customs officers found that the same consignor had arranged for the freight consolidator concerned to transship two cargo consignments, also declared as carrying printers and guitar tuners, overseas in mid-September. Customs contacted the overseas law enforcement agencies concerned to conduct follow-up investigations.

Later, Customs officers found that the consignor concerned adopted the same approach to arrange for the same freight consolidator to receive a consignment, declared as carrying guitar tuners, arriving in Hong Kong from the United States. The consignment was intercepted on October 10 at the airport and about 4kg of suspected methamphetamine were found concealed inside a printer and a speaker. The third dangerous drugs case was thereby detected successfully.

In the fourth and fifth cases, through risk assessment, Customs officers

on October 13 inspected two air cargo consignments arriving in Hong Kong from the United States. Two batches of about 12kg of suspected cannabis buds in total were found concealed inside tea leaf packaging bags. The two consignments had the same consignee address, which was a freight consolidator in Kwai Chung.

Investigations of the five above-mentioned cases are ongoing. The three arrested men have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds members of the public to stay alert and not to participate in drug trafficking activities for monetary return. They must not accept hiring or delegation from another party to carry controlled items into and out of Hong Kong. They are also reminded not to carry unknown items for other people, nor to release their personal data or home address to others for receiving parcels or goods.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Customs also reminds that cannabis and tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) are classified as dangerous drugs under the Ordinance. Importation of products (including food or drinks) containing cannabis or THC into Hong Kong is prohibited unless the relevant provisions in the Ordinance are complied with. In order to avoid breaching the law inadvertently, special attention should be paid to the packaging labels of food and drinks.

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



