

[Hong Kong Customs detects four seaborne illicit cigarette smuggling cases with seizure worth about \\$33 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs detected four illicit cigarette smuggling cases from September 25 to October 4. A total of about 7.4 million of suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$33 million and a duty potential of about \$25 million in total were seized.

Through risk assessment and intelligence analysis, Customs on September 25 selected and inspected a 40-foot seaborne container, arriving from Nansha to Hong Kong and declared as carrying ceramic tiles, at the Tuen Mun River Trade Terminal Customs Cargo Examination Compound. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized about 2.4 million of suspected illicit cigarettes inside the container, and a 68-year-old man suspected to be connected with the case was arrested.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs on October 2, 3 and 4 further detected three similar cases at the Tuen Mun River Trade Terminal Customs Cargo Examination Compound, where three 40-foot containers, all arriving in Hong Kong from Nansha and declared as carrying food, cardboards and chandeliers respectively, were examined. A total of about 5 million suspected illicit cigarettes were seized therein. Three men, aged between 67 and 68, who were suspected to be connected with the cases were arrested.

Investigations of the four cases are ongoing.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis, and step up enforcement actions to combat cross-boundary illicit cigarettes activities. Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 80 80 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

