

## [Hong Kong Customs detects large-scale illicit cigarette smuggling case with seizure worth about \\$62 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs detected a large-scale illicit cigarette smuggling case on August 15 and seized about 17 million suspected illicit cigarettes at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. The estimated market value was about \$62 million with a duty potential of about \$42 million.

Through risk assessment and intelligence analysis, Customs selected and inspected two 40-foot seaborne containers, arriving in Hong Kong from Cambodia and declared as carrying dried cassava, that morning. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes inside the containers.

An investigation is ongoing. Customs will continue to trace the source and flow of the illicit cigarettes.

Including the suspected illicit cigarettes seized in this operation, Customs had seized about 470 million suspected illicit cigarettes this year as at yesterday (August 17). Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multipronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette 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.

Customs reminds members of the public that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. 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 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/)).

