

[Hong Kong Customs detects two illicit cigarette smuggling cases with tobacco product seizures worth about \\$120 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs conducted anti-illicit cigarette operations in Tin Shui Wai, Kwai Chung and Yuen Long over the past week and detected two large-scale illicit cigarette smuggling cases. A total of about 15 million suspected illicit cigarettes and about 7,800 kilograms of suspected duty-not-paid manufactured tobacco with an estimated total market value of about \$120 million and a duty potential of about \$81 million were seized.

In the first case, after an in-depth investigation, Customs on November 30 raided a logistics warehouse in Tin Shui Wai and seized about 5 million suspected illicit cigarettes from a batch of goods arriving from Malaysia en route to Australia via Hong Kong.

In the second case, based on intelligence analysis, Customs yesterday (December 2) intercepted a 40-foot container arriving from Thailand, declared as carrying groceries, at the Kwai Chung Container Terminal. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized about 10 million suspected illicit cigarettes inside the container and arrested a 63-year-old male truck driver, who was suspected to be connected with the case. During the subsequent controlled delivery operation on the same day, Customs officers further seized about 7,800kg of suspected duty-not-paid manufactured tobacco at San Tin, Yuen Long, cracked down on a large manufactured tobacco storage centre and arrested four men aged between 32 and 40 who were suspected to be connected with the case, including the person in charge of the warehouse and three porters.

Investigations of the two cases are ongoing.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis, and step up enforcement actions to combat cross-boundary 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.

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 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form

(eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

