

Hong Kong Customs highly concerned about business suspension of chain fitness and beauty group causing losses to consumers

Hong Kong Customs has noticed that a chain fitness and beauty group suddenly announced today (September 6) that it would be suspending operations at all branches. As a result, customers who had purchased prepaid fitness and beauty services are unable to use the relevant services.

As of 4.30pm today, Customs had received four complaints regarding the chain group concerned. The department will contact the complainants for case details in order to commence an investigation.

Customs appeals to consumers who have purchased fitness or beauty services from the chain group to contact Customs as soon as possible. Customs will conduct an investigation based on the information upon the receipt of complaints.

Customs is highly concerned about the incident and has set up a dedicated team to follow up with a view to handling the cases as soon as possible. The department will also continue to closely monitor the situation. Should there be any violation of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), Customs will take decisive enforcement action.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers are also reminded to procure services at reputable shops and consider prudently before making decisions for consumption with prepayment. After purchasing services, they should keep the relevant records, such as transaction receipts and contracts, which can become basic information in case a complaint is lodged in the future.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence if at the time of acceptance of payment, the trader intends not to supply the product or intends to supply a materially different product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).