

Hong Kong Customs highly concerned about pain treatment centre suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices in selling prepaid treatments

Hong Kong Customs has recently received reports from a number of members of the public stating that a chain pain treatment centre is engaging in unfair trade practices to sell prepaid treatments and is suspected of contravening the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Hong Kong Customs is highly concerned about the incident and deployed more than 40 officers today (December 21) to conduct an investigation at the nine outlets of the trader concerned in different districts.

As at noon today, Customs has received a total of 23 reports. Customs officers have successfully contacted all the complainants and will investigate each reported case in depth.

Customs will continue to keep a close watch on the trade practices of the concerned pain treatment centre and its related industry. If any traders are found to be in breach of the TDO, the department 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 think prudently before making decisions for consumption involving prepayment. After purchasing services, consumers should keep the transaction receipts and related records, which can become basic information in case a complaint is lodged in the future.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence if the trader applies a false trade description to a service provided, or offered to be provided, to a consumer. A trader commits the offence of aggressive commercial practices under the TDO if he/she uses harassment, coercion or undue influence, thereby restricting or impairing consumers' freedom of choice and conduct in making transactional decisions. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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/).