

Hong Kong Customs makes first-ever detection of selling counterfeit accessories through live webcasts (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an operation on September 21 and detected a case of selling suspected counterfeit accessories through live webcasts on social media and seized about 2 000 items of suspected counterfeit accessories with an estimated market value of about \$100,000. This is the first time Customs has detected the selling of suspected counterfeit accessories through live webcasts on social media.

Customs earlier received information alleging that suspected counterfeit goods were put on sale through a social media platform. Upon initial investigation, Customs officers found that a seller had set up a dedicated page on a social media platform to sell suspected counterfeit accessories through live webcasts.

Each live webcast session would last for about five to six hours and was mostly conducted during an overnight period in order to evade Customs' detection. The transactions were made in an interactive mode with customers. Upon receiving orders, the seller would ask the buyers to transfer money to designated bank accounts. The suspected counterfeit goods would then be delivered to buyers via couriers.

After an in-depth investigation with the assistance of trademark owners, Customs officers took enforcement action on September 21 and raided a residential unit in Sha Tin where the batch of suspected counterfeit accessories, including earrings, hair ornaments and scarfs, were seized.

During the operation, one man and one woman, both aged 30, were arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs appeals to consumers to procure goods offered by reputable shops and websites with favourable comments and to check with the trademark owners or authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

