

Hong Kong Customs makes first seizure of mitragynine (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs seized over 2.5 tonnes of mitragynine with an estimated market value of about \$6.67 million at Hong Kong International Airport on September 30. This is the first seizure of mitragynine made by Customs since mitragynine was listed in the First Schedule to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO) on August 13 this year.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers inspected an air transshipment consignment, declared as carrying *Mitragyna speciosa*, arriving from Indonesia en route to America via Hong Kong. Upon examination, Customs officers found a batch of green powder in 124 carton boxes. Tests by the Government Laboratory revealed that the powder contained mitragynine.

Mitragynine is the major compound available in a plant known as *Mitragyna speciosa* (also known as kratom). If mitragynine is abused, it may cause health effects including nausea, constipation, increased urination, loss of appetite, seizures, hallucinations and withdrawal symptoms.

Customs reminds importers, exporters and the logistics industry that importation of dangerous drugs requires an import licence and import certificate issued by the Department of Health. A valid export authorisation or diversion certificate from the exporting country will also be required. Transshipment of dangerous drugs also requires a removal licence issued by the Department of Health.

Under the DDO, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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

