

Hong Kong Customs makes first-time seizure of fenethylamine (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs made the city's first-time seizure of suspected fenethylamine in the form of 1.57 million tablets from a transshipment container on November 8 at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. With amphetamine as an active ingredient, which is controlled under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO), the estimated seizure value of about \$245 million is also its biggest case in terms of market price as detected by Hong Kong Customs.

By means of risk assessment, Customs officers selected a transshipment seaborne container from Syria heading for Saudi Arabia via Hong Kong and the Mainland for inspection. The shipment manifest declared that it was a furniture product consignment. Upon inspection, Customs officers found the batch of suspected drugs concealed beneath the seat bases of 84 sofas.

An investigation revealed that the drugs are not for the local market. It is believed that the drug trafficking syndicate made a circuitous routing of different stops in an attempt to escape from law enforcement agencies and transport the drugs from the Middle East and back to the same region.

Fenethylamine (or fenetylline) is usually in tablet form and was once used as medicine for mental or nervous system disorders in overseas countries. Being an addictive stimulant to the human central nervous system, it can cause euphoric intensity in users and has been exploited by criminal groups for profit-generating purposes.

Risk assessment has all along been an effective strategy by Hong Kong Customs to intercept the import and transit movements of dangerous drugs in various channels. The department will continue to step up anti-narcotic efforts by risk assessment and intelligence analysis.

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).

