

Hong Kong Customs mounts operation to combat illicit cigarettes (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a territory-wide operation codenamed "Hammer" to strike storage and distribution activities of illicit cigarettes from July 27 to today (August 3). A total of about 1.1 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$3 million and a duty potential of about \$2.1 million were seized.

Customs officers detected four cases of suspected storage and distribution of illicit cigarettes in Kam Tin, Wong Tai Sin, Sheung Shui and Tai Po with seizures of about 100 000 suspected illicit cigarettes between July 27 and yesterday (August 2). Three men and two women, aged between 58 and 88, were arrested.

Customs officers today also seized about 1 million suspected illicit cigarettes in an iron hut in Yuen Long. A 27-year-old man was arrested.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

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

