

[Hong Kong Customs raids suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Kwun Tong industrial building \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 30) raided a suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Kwun Tong and seized about 74 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$270,000 and a duty potential of about \$190,000.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in Kwun Tong last night, Customs officers intercepted a suspicious man who was moving goods in an industrial building on King Yip Street. Upon inspection, the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes was seized from a mini-storage unit at the industrial building, and the 63-year-old man who claimed to be unemployed and was suspected to be connected with the case was arrested.

An initial investigation revealed that the man rented the mini-storage unit and used it as an illicit cigarette storage centre that was mainly used to supply illicit cigarettes to residents in the East Kowloon district. Customs will continue to trace the source of the illicit cigarettes, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

The arrested male was charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies" and will appear at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts on March 7.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multipronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

Customs stresses that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. 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.

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Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities 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).

