

[Hong Kong Customs raids suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Tsuen Wan industrial building \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (November 22) raided a suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Tsuen Wan and seized about 850,000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$3.2 million and a duty potential of about \$2.1 million.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in Tsuen Wan yesterday afternoon, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes at an industrial building unit. A 28-year-old man and a 33-year-old man, both claiming to be unemployed, who were suspected to be connected to the case, were arrested.

Customs believes that the illicit cigarette syndicate used that unit as an illicit cigarette packaging centre. Criminals used audio speakers with internal structures hollowed out as a cover, and converted them into containers for storing illicit cigarettes in a bid to deter law enforcement efforts by Customs. An initial investigation revealed that the suspected illicit cigarettes involved in the case were intended to be exported to foreign locations before Christmas. Customs will continue to trace the source of the illicit cigarettes, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

The two arrested persons were charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies" and will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (November 24).

With the Christmas holidays approaching, Customs will continue to combat illicit cigarette activities on all fronts through a multi-pronged approach.

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.

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/).

