

## Hong Kong Customs raids suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Tsuen Wan (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (June 11) raided a suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Tsuen Wan and seized about 230 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$1.05 million and a duty potential of about \$770,000. About 20 000 suspected illicit cigarettes seized were "cheap whites", accounting for about 9 per cent of the total seizure.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in Tsuen Wan last night, Customs intercepted a suspicious man holding a carton box and a nylon bag on Sha Tsui Road. About 10 000 suspected illicit cigarettes were seized from the man and he was subsequently arrested. Later, Customs officers escorted the 48-year-old man, who claimed to be a construction worker, to a residential unit of a tenement building nearby for a search, and further seized about 220 000 suspected illicit cigarettes therein.

An initial investigation revealed that the suspected illicit cigarette storage centre involved in the case was mainly used to supply illicit cigarettes to residents in Tsuen Wan. Customs will continue to trace the source of the illicit cigarettes, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

The arrested man has been charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies" and will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on July 10.

Customs will also 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.

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](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).

