

Hong Kong Customs raids two suspected illicit cigarette storage centres (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (March 13) conducted anti-illicit cigarette operations in Sham Shui Po and Kwun Tong respectively, and shut down two suspected illicit cigarette storage centres. A total of about 210 000 suspected illicit cigarettes, with a total estimated market value of about \$1 million and a duty potential of about \$700,000, were seized.

In the first case, Customs officers seized about 40 000 suspected illicit cigarettes from a unit of a subdivided flat in Tai Nan Street, Sham Shui Po, this morning. A 89-year-old man who claimed to be unemployed and is suspected to be connected with the case was arrested.

In the second case, Customs officers in the same morning further seized about 170 000 suspected illicit cigarettes from a residential unit of a tenement building in Shung Yan Street, Kwun Tong. A 58-year-old woman who claimed to be unemployed and is suspected to be connected with the case was arrested.

The two arrested persons have been charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies". The 89-year-old man and the 58-year-old woman will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on March 27 and the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts on April 18 respectively.

Customs reminds members of the public 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/).

