

[Hong Kong Customs raids two suspected illicit cigarette storage centres with seizure worth about \\$57 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs on May 29 shut down two large-scale suspected illicit cigarette storage centres in Kwai Chung and Yuen Long. A total of about 12.6 million suspected illicit cigarettes with a total estimated market value of about \$57 million and a duty potential of about \$42 million were seized.

Customs had previously identified a cigarette smuggling syndicate active in the New Territories for in-depth investigations. Afterwards, Customs officers took action on the afternoon of May 29, and raided an industrial building unit on Ta Chuen Ping Street, Kwai Chung. About 1.3 million suspected illicit cigarettes were seized therein and a 37-year-old man who claimed to be a driver and was suspected to be connected with the case was arrested. Customs officers later escorted the man to the parking lot of the building and searched two light goods vehicles suspected to be involved in the case. About 1.1 million suspected illicit cigarettes were further seized inside the vehicles.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers on the same night seized about 10.2 million suspected illicit cigarettes inside a metal hut in Tan Kwai Tsuen, Yuen Long, shutting down another suspected illicit cigarette storage centre.

The arrested person has been released on bail pending further investigation. An investigation is ongoing and Customs will continue to trace the source and the flow of the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes.

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.

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/).

