

# Hong Kong Customs seizes about 200 000 suspected counterfeit medical-grade face masks in one week (with photo)

Following the seizure of about 100 000 suspected counterfeit medical-grade face masks in detecting the largest-ever case of its kind on October 28, Hong Kong Customs yesterday (November 3) again seized about 100 000 suspected counterfeit medical-grade face masks intended to be transshipped overseas via Hong Kong, with an estimated market value of about \$3 million. One person was arrested. Altogether, about 200 000 suspected counterfeit medical-grade face masks with an estimated market value of about \$6 million were seized and two persons were arrested in the two cases.

Customs earlier received information alleging that a company was involved in illegal activities involving counterfeit face masks. After an investigation with the assistance of the trademark owner, Customs took enforcement action yesterday and raided a logistics company in Kwai Chung, where the batch of suspected counterfeit medical-grade face masks and a batch of packing materials were seized. A 42-year-old female person-in-charge of the company was arrested.

Initial investigations revealed that the batch of face masks have not entered the local retail market. It was believed that unscrupulous merchants intended to repack the batch of masks and then transship them overseas for sale and profit. Customs is looking into the source of the face masks involved in the case. Samples have also been sent to a laboratory for a safety test.

An investigation is ongoing and the arrested woman has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs will continue to take stringent enforcement action and maintain close contact with trademark owners in monitoring the market situation with a view to proactively combating counterfeit protective items.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trade mark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Customs has conducted a territory-wide special operation codenamed "Guardian" since January 27 this year to conduct spot checks and enforcement operations on common protective items. More than 6 000 officers have been mobilised to conduct over 38 000 inspections at retail spots. The operation will continue and Customs will carry on its high-profile law enforcement to combat and prevent violation of the TDO and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO).

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TD0 or the CGS0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

