

Hong Kong Customs seizes cannabis-type dangerous drugs worth about \$46 million in past two months (with photos)

â€œIn the light of cannabis abuse among youths, Hong Kong Customs has stepped up enforcement before the summer holidays to vigorously combat smuggling of cannabis-type dangerous drugs. In June and July this year, 38 cases were detected successfully and about 291 kilograms of suspected cannabis-type dangerous drugs with an estimated market value of about \$46 million were seized. Seven persons aged between 18 and 36 suspected to be connected with the cases were arrested. The number of cases and the seizure amount have increased about 1.4-fold and about 1.1-fold compared to the figures for the same period last year. The main origins of cannabis-type dangerous drugs are regions with relatively loose enforcement control against cannabis, such as North America.

Among the above-mentioned cases, three of them were in-town cases while 35 cases were detected at Hong Kong International Airport. Customs officers seized a total of about 123kg of cannabis-type dangerous drugs with an estimated market value of about \$16 million at the airport. The number of cases and the seizure amount have increased about 2.2-fold and about 1-fold compared to the figures for June and July last year.

The major types of cannabis-type dangerous drugs seized by Customs officers included cannabis buds, herbal cannabis and cannabis resins, which weighed about 87kg and accounted for about 70 per cent of the cannabis-type dangerous drugs seized. The remaining 30 per cent were cannabidiol (CBD) products suspected of containing tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC), which weighed about 36kg.

Other than traditional cannabis, Customs noticed that various CBD products have also emerged in the market in recent years. Many of them were tested to contain THC which is a dangerous drug. Customs has been taking a positive attitude in this regard. The department has mounted enforcement actions proactively and has strived to deter the illegal import of CBD products suspected of containing THC into Hong Kong. From January to July this year, Customs seized a total of about 27 500 items of CBD products suspected of containing THC with arrests of 12 persons aged between 18 and 44 suspected to be connected with the cases. The seizure amount and the number of arrests have substantially increased about 14-fold and about 11-fold compared to the figures for the same period last year.

Customs reminds members of the public not to release their personal data or address to others for receiving mail or goods to avoid having their information used in illegal activities. The public also should not receive mail and goods for others. Moreover, importers and traders are also

responsible for ensuring that the products they supply do not contain THC or other dangerous drugs.

During the summer holidays, drug syndicates may take the opportunity to recruit youngsters to carry out drug trafficking activities. Customs appeals to parents to keep an eye on their children to prevent them from participating in drug trafficking activities under peer influence. Youngsters should also stay alert and not participate in related activities for monetary return.

Cannabis and THC are both classified as dangerous drugs under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO). Importation of products (including food or drinks) containing cannabis or THC into Hong Kong is prohibited unless the relevant provisions in the DDO are complied with. Members of the public should avoid bringing cannabis-type products or pure CBD products from overseas into Hong Kong.

Under the DDO, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

