

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes and illicit heat-not-burn products (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (May 13) detected two suspected illicit cigarette cases and seized a total of about 170 000 suspected illicit cigarettes and about 130 000 suspected illicit heat-not-burn (HNB) products with an estimated market value of about \$830,000 and a duty potential of about \$570,000 in Kwun Tong, Tseung Kwan O, Causeway Bay and Tuen Mun.

Customs officers seized about 150 000 suspected illicit cigarettes at an industrial building unit in Kwun Tong in the early hours today and arrested a 51-year-old man. Later, Customs officers further seized about 20 000 suspected illicit cigarettes in the premises of the arrested man in Tseung Kwan O. The arrested man was charged with contravening the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO) and will appear at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (May 14).

Also, during an anti-illicit cigarette operation in Causeway Bay this afternoon, Customs officers intercepted a man and two women, aged between 21 and 40, and seized about 100 000 suspected illicit HNB products. Upon follow-up investigation, Customs officers further seized about 30 000 suspected illicit HNB products from a batch of parcels at a mail centre in Tuen Mun. Investigation is ongoing.

Under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. All HNB products containing tobacco in content are also dutiable goods subject to the control of the DCO. Any person who imports, possesses, sells or buys dutiable commodities without a valid licence 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).

