

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \\$19 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (March 21) conducted anti-illicit cigarette operations in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. A total of about 4.1 million suspected illicit cigarettes, with a total estimated market value of about \$19 million and a duty potential of about \$14 million were seized, and a suspected illicit cigarette storage centre was shut down.

Customs in the early morning of yesterday searched a suspicious metal hut in Fung Kat Heung, Yuen Long. After inspection, Customs officers seized a total of about 3.1 million suspected illicit cigarettes inside the metal hut, on a nearby lorry and from a private car. A 46-year-old male driver who attempted to escape in another lorry was also arrested. The lorry and the private car, which were suspected to be used for storing and distributing illicit cigarettes, were detained as well.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers in the morning of the same day searched a lorry in a car park in Hing Fu Street, Tuen Mun, and further seized about 1 million suspected illicit cigarettes from the vehicle.

The arrested person has been charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies" and "resisting a member of the Customs and Excise Service", and the case will be brought up at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (March 23).

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.

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/).

