

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \\$57 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (December 23) seized about 21 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$57 million and a duty potential of about \$40 million in Yuen Long. Two men were arrested.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in San Tin, Yuen Long, yesterday afternoon, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes from two 40-foot containers at a container yard. Two men, aged 63 and 69, suspected to be connected to the case were arrested.

An investigation is ongoing. Customs will continue to trace the source and the flow of the illicit cigarettes. The likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Customs will continue to combat illicit cigarette activities on all fronts through intelligence analysis. The department will also step up enforcement during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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).

