

# Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \$6.32 million (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (August 12) seized about 1.7 million suspected illicit cigarettes in Stanley with an estimated market value of about \$6.32 million and a duty potential of about \$4.3 million.

Customs conducted an anti-smuggling cigarette operation at St Stephen's Beach (South) Pier in Stanley early this morning and found several suspicious men moving a large number of carton boxes from a ship to a suspicious lorry at the seashore. They were suspected of participating in smuggling activities and officers then took action. When customs officers stepped forward to intercept, several men suspected of being involved in the case immediately jumped into the sea and fled. Customs officers eventually subdued and arrested five men, aged between 17 and 56. Upon inspection, customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes inside the lorry and near the pier, and the lorry suspected to be involved was detained.

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 its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multi-pronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

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.

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](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).

