

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \\$76 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 17) conducted anti-illicit cigarette operation and seized about 27 million suspected illicit cigarettes in Man Kam To, Tsing Yi and Sheung Shui with an estimated market value of about \$76 million and a duty potential of about \$53 million. A 59-year-old man has been arrested.

Customs officers first intercepted a container truck near Ping Che Road and seized about four million suspected illicit cigarettes inside the container. After an initial investigation, Customs officers then searched three other containers in two container yards in Tsing Yi and Sheung Shui. Further seizures of about 23 million suspected illicit cigarettes were made from the containers.

During the operation, Customs officers arrested one man and detained four containers suspected to be in connection with the case.

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.

Together with the seizures in this case, Customs has so far this year seized about 243 million suspected illicit cigarettes, about 20 per cent more of last year's total in terms of seizure quantity.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through multi-pronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to combat 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.

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).

