

Hong Kong Customs special operation combats counterfeiting activities (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a territory-wide special enforcement operation between August 8 and 20 to combat counterfeiting activities. A total of about 5 000 suspected counterfeit goods and a batch of business-operating equipment, with a total estimated market value of about \$330,000, were seized.

Customs earlier received information alleging that suspected counterfeit perfumes were sold or provided in the course of business by retail shops, dispensaries, and claw-machine shops. After an in-depth investigation and with the assistance of the trademark owners, Customs officers took enforcement during the abovementioned period and raided 10 shops in Mong Kok, Kwai Chung, Tsuen Wan, Tung Chung and Sai Kung. A batch of suspected counterfeit perfumes, cosmetics and skincare products, six claw-machines and three coin changing machines were seized.

During the operation, four men and four women, aged between 20 and 46, were arrested. They comprise three persons-in-charge and five staff members of the shops. The investigation is ongoing and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out. In addition, samples of the suspected counterfeit goods involved in the case will be sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

Customs will continue to step up inspections and enforcement to fight against the sale of counterfeit goods and the use of counterfeit goods for the purpose of trade.

Customs reminds consumers to procure goods at reputable shops and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt. Traders should also be cautious and prudent in merchandising since selling counterfeit goods and the possession of counterfeit goods for any purpose of trade are a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected counterfeiting 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).

