

Hong Kong Customs special operation combats online sale of counterfeit mooncakes (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs has mounted a special operation since August 30 to combat the online sale of counterfeit mooncakes. A total of 114 boxes of suspected counterfeit mooncakes and more than 2 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods, including perfume, cosmetics and kitchenware, with a total estimated market value of about \$650,000, have been seized as of today (September 10). Four persons were arrested.

Customs earlier received information from a trademark owner alleging that suspected counterfeit mooncakes were put on sale through some online platforms. Customs officers then conducted detection and analysis through a big-data analytics system and targeted a number of online platform accounts for investigation.

After an in-depth investigation and with the assistance of trademark owners, Customs officers took enforcement actions on consecutive days and raided four online platform accounts selling suspected counterfeit mooncakes. Two residential premises in Tuen Mun and Kam Tin, an industrial unit in Tuen Mun and a mini-storage in Sheung Wan were also searched, resulting in seizures of the batch of suspected counterfeit mooncakes and suspected counterfeit goods.

During the operation, one man and three women, aged between 25 and 34, were arrested.

Investigation is ongoing. Customs is looking into the source of the mooncakes involved in the cases and samples have been sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

With the Mid-autumn Festival around the corner, Customs will continue to step up inspections and enforcement to combat the sale of festive counterfeit food items and counterfeit goods.

Customs appeals to consumers to purchase goods at shops or online shops with a good reputation and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs also reminds online sellers not to sell counterfeit goods and to be cautious and prudent in merchandising since selling counterfeit goods is 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 infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

