

Hong Kong Customs special operation combats online sales of counterfeit perfume and cosmetics products (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a special operation yesterday (August 17) to combat the online sales of counterfeit perfume and cosmetics products. Preliminary figures show that about 3 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods, including perfumes, cosmetics products and accessories, with an estimated market value of about \$1.3 million, were involved in the operation. Three persons were arrested.

Customs earlier received information alleging that suspected counterfeit perfume and cosmetics products were put on sale through several 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 yesterday and detected two cases of selling suspected counterfeit goods on a self-developed website and online platforms. A residential premises in Tsuen Wan and an industrial unit in Cheung Sha Wan were also searched, resulting in seizures of the batch of suspected counterfeit goods.

During the operation, one man and two women, aged between 24 and 37, were arrested.

An investigation is ongoing and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out. Also, Customs is looking into the source of the suspected counterfeit goods involved in the cases, and samples will be sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

Customs reminds customers to purchase goods at reputable shops or online shops and to avoid conducting transactions with suspicious online shops. Customers should check with trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs has been striving to protect consumer rights and carries out inspections in the market and on the Internet from time to time. Moreover, Customs officers use a big-data analytics system to conduct risk assessments and analyses to verify whether online shops have complied with the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO) with a view to safeguarding the interests of consumers while making online purchases.

Under the TDO, 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) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

