

Hong Kong Customs steps up consumer protection work during Mainland's National Day Golden Week period (with photos)

Since September 28, Hong Kong Customs has conducted patrols during the Mainland's National Day Golden Week period at popular shopping spots in various districts to remind traders to comply with the requirements of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), with a view to safeguarding the rights of local consumers and visitors.

Apart from patrolling popular shopping areas, Customs officers will also promote compliance at dried seafood and ginseng shops, pharmacies and jewellery shops in different tourist shopping areas such as Yau Tsim Mong and Causeway Bay. Retail shops and workers in the tourist industry will be reminded to comply with the requirements of the TDO.

Customs officers will also distribute pamphlets at control points and popular shopping spots to remind visitors to have a good understanding of a product's specifications and make comparisons before purchasing. They should patronise shops with good reputations. They are also reminded to carefully check the total price and unit price of goods before making payment and to retain transaction receipts and related records, which can serve as supporting documents in case a complaint is lodged in the future.

Customs has long been concerned about visitors being misled into making purchases through unfair trade practices and has established a Quick Response Team to handle urgent complaints lodged by short-haul visitors. The complaints will be promptly referred to investigators for priority handling.

Under the TDO, any trader who adopts unfair trade practices, including making false trade descriptions in relation to goods, misleading omissions, aggressive commercial practices as well as bait and switch practices, 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 suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or 182 80 80 (in service starting tomorrow (October 1)), or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

