

Hong Kong Customs steps up enforcement in summer holidays and appeals to young people to follow the law (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs has stepped up enforcement actions during the summer holidays to combat illegal activities of different types and today (July 30) reminded young people to never become involved in such activities.

A Customs spokesman said that criminals often lure students and young people into carrying various prohibited or controlled items such as dangerous drugs, arms, ammunition, weapons, animals and plants, endangered species and powdered formula during the summer holidays. Young people may also be tricked into joining activities related to illicit cigarettes and pirated or counterfeit items.

The spokesman stressed that Customs has stepped up holiday mobilisation for stringent enforcement actions at boundary control points, inside the territory and on Internet platforms.

Customs reminds members of the public to stay alert in particular to recruitment posts on unfamiliar websites and social media platforms. They must not accept hiring or delegation from another party to carry prohibited, controlled, duty-not-paid, pirated or counterfeit items into and out of Hong Kong. They are also reminded not to carry unknown items for other people, and their home address should not be allowed for other people's use for parcel delivery.

The spokesman also called for those who travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland to pay attention to the legal and standard differences between the two places. In particular, possession of an air gun with muzzle energy under 2 joules does not constitute an offence in Hong Kong but may breach laws in the Mainland. Travellers should be aware of the discrepancies to avoid any potential law violation.

Customs has also stepped up monitoring and enforcement actions against infringing activities during the holiday period. Young people are urged not to participate in Internet or physical shop piracy and counterfeiting activities.

On top of taking stringent enforcement actions, Customs has also strengthened its publicity and education efforts at boundary control points and Internet platforms to remind people, in particular the youth, to stay alert and follow the law at all times.

Customs reminds that smuggling activities, trafficking or possession of dangerous drugs and selling or possession for sale of pirated or counterfeit

goods, as well as buying or selling or possession of illicit cigarettes, are serious crimes. People should not risk their future as offenders will be criminally liable once convicted. A criminal record will be kept and the consequences are especially far-reaching for young people.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, the maximum penalty for trafficking in a dangerous drug is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

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

Under the Copyright Ordinance, the maximum penalty for any person who possesses an infringing copy of a copyright work with a view to selling it is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years upon conviction. Any person who, for the purpose of a circumvention business, or in the course of a circumvention business, sells or lets for hire a relevant device, or provides relevant service in order to allow circumventing an effective technological measure which has been applied in relation to a copyright work, is liable to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for four years.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting endangered species including agarwood, orchids, ivory, American ginseng, pangolin scales, dried seahorse and live turtles without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years.

Hong Kong Customs has all along adopted a zero-tolerance approach against illegal activities and is determined to step up enforcement actions during the summer holidays. The spokesman reiterated that in order to combat various kinds of illegal activities, the department will continue to strengthen customs clearance supervision through risk management and intelligence analysis, apart from conducting joint operations with other enforcement agencies.

Members of the public may report any suspected illegal activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk). All information received by Customs will be kept in confidence.

