

Hong Kong Customs steps up enforcement to combat counterfeit goods activities before Lunar New Year (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an eight-day operation codenamed "Tracer" from January 7 to 14 to combat counterfeit goods activities involving local delivery and cross-boundary transshipment. During the operation, Customs seized about 27 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of over \$10 million. Two men and a woman were arrested.

Through intelligence analysis, Customs officers first identified a number of logistics companies in Yuen Long, Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung, and conducted strike-and-search operations. About 26 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$9.4 million were seized.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs believes that some of suspected counterfeit goods seized were to be delivered locally while the rest would have been re-exported to overseas destinations. Officers subsequently mounted a controlled delivery operation and raided a storehouse-cum-packing centre at an industrial unit in Lai Chi Kok on January 12. About 470 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$600,000 were seized and a 31-year-old woman was arrested.

In addition, officers raided a mobile hawker pitch selling suspected counterfeit goods in Sham Shui Po on January 14. About 89 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$40,000 were seized and a 34-year-old man was arrested.

For land boundary, Customs officers through risk assessment intercepted an incoming truck at Shenzhen Bay Control Point on January 10. About 500 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$200,000 were seized inside the truck and a 60-year-old male driver was arrested.

Investigation is ongoing and the three arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

With the Lunar New Year around the corner, Customs will continue to step up inspection and enforcement to vigorously combat different types of counterfeit goods activities before and during the holiday.

Customs reminds consumers to procure goods at reputable shops or websites and to check with the trademark owners or authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt. Also, traders are reminded not to sell counterfeit goods at shops and online and to be cautious and prudent in merchandising since the sale of counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who imports or exports or sells or possesses for sale any goods to which a forged trademark is applied 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).

