

Hong Kong Customs steps up patrols to combat infringement activities during World Cup period (with photos)

With the 2022 FIFA World Cup matches being held, Hong Kong Customs has maintained close co-operation with copyright owners and trademark owners, and has stepped up patrols and enforcement on all fronts, with a view to combating criminals taking the opportunity to conduct infringement activities related to the World Cup during the period.

Customs officers conducted cyber patrols through a big data analytics system to combat infringement activities involving circumventing paid TV channels. They also conducted spot checks and inspections in various districts to halt different types of infringement activities. As at today (November 29), more than 20 spot checks have been conducted by Customs in the market, including those jointly organised with copyright owners.

The relevant patrol operations will continue. Customs reminds business operators not to take part in circumvention activities, since selling a circumvention device or providing a circumvention service is a serious crime. Also, members of the public should respect intellectual property rights and not buy any circumvention devices. Unknown websites connected with the circumvention devices might contain computer viruses or malware which can pose a risk to users.

Customs also reminds traders or online sellers not to sell counterfeit goods and to be cautious and prudent with merchandising since selling counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions. Moreover, consumers should purchase goods at reputable shops or websites. To lower the risk of purchasing counterfeit goods, consumers should check with the trademark owners or authorised agents if they are in doubt.

Under the Copyright Ordinance, 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, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for four years.

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 infringement or counterfeiting activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

