

Incoming driver convicted and jailed for importing duty-not-paid cigarettes (with photos)

A 38-year-old incoming male driver was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and fined \$1,000 at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (March 25) for importing duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare to Customs Officers, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

Through risk assessment and intelligence analysis, Hong Kong Customs intercepted an inbound private car, declared to be unladen, at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port yesterday (March 24). Upon inspection, Customs Officers seized a total of about 18 200 sticks of duty-not-paid cigarettes, with an estimated market value of about \$93,000 and a duty potential of about \$60,000, from the hollow space of the vehicle's front doors, the front bumper and the centre console. The male driver was subsequently arrested, and the cross-boundary private car was also seized.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences. Customs reminds members of the public that under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who imports, deals with, possesses, sells or buys illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Customs will continue to combat cross-boundary smuggling activities with firm enforcement action based on risk assessment and intelligence analysis.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

