

Pharmacy group convicted of supplying and possessing for sale disinfectant alcohol with false trade descriptions

Five companies of a pharmacy group were convicted and fined \$7,000 to \$31,000 today (May 14) at Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts for supplying and possessing for sale disinfectant alcohol with false trade descriptions applied, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Hong Kong Customs received information in February last year alleging the sale of disinfectant alcohol with suspected false descriptions of composition at a pharmacy in Tuen Mun. Customs officers later test-purchased the disinfectant alcohol concerned labelled as "75% ethanol" and "1 litre" and sent samples to the Government Laboratory for examination. Test results revealed that the ethanol content and actual volume of the disinfectant alcohol were different from its product descriptions, in contravention of the TDO.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers should also purchase disinfectant alcohol with recognised brands from reputable shops.

In view of the development of the COVID-19 epidemic, Customs has conducted a territory-wide operation codenamed "Guardian" since January 27 last year to conduct spot checks and enforcement operations on common protective items to ensure that those items sold in the market comply with relevant ordinances. The operation is ongoing and law enforcement action will be taken immediately if any suspected violations are detected.

Under the TDO, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, 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 violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).