

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 12.5 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$12.3 million at Hong Kong International Airport on July 27.

Customs officers inspected an air consignment arriving in Hong Kong from Brazil on July 27 and found the batch of suspected cocaine concealed inside packages of food powder. A 62-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case was arrested. He has been released on bail pending further investigation.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers yesterday (July 29) further arrested a 27-year-old woman and a 29-year-old man in Kwai Chung suspected to be in connection with the case. A batch of drug packaging paraphernalia was also seized at a premises in the district.

Investigation is ongoing.

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

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Marine Department announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No.3 has been issued, the Marine Department reminds vessel owners, masters and persons-in-charge of vessels that they should take precautionary measures immediately and properly secure their vessels at safe locations.

In case of an accident, a report should be made immediately to the Vessel Traffic Centre at 2233 7801.

HAD's emergency hotline activated

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

Following the issuing of Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3, the Home Affairs Department has activated a round-the-clock hotline, 2835 1473, for public enquiries on the tropical cyclone.

Make prior work arrangements for typhoons and rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (July 30) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff during and after typhoons and rainstorms. These arrangements not only can ensure the safety of employees and the smooth operation of establishments, but also are conducive to maintaining good labour-management relations.

"Employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures during and after typhoons and rainstorms. In drawing up and implementing the work arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety and the feasibility for employees to travel to and from their workplaces. Employers should also give consideration as much as possible to the situations faced by individual employees, such as their place of residence and the road and traffic conditions in the vicinity, and adopt a sympathetic and flexible approach with due regard to their actual difficulties," an LD spokesman said.

"To avoid misunderstanding, disputes and confusion, employers should draw up the work arrangements in consultation with employees and make appropriate updates or amendments based on the experience of each occasion and the needs of both employers and employees, as well as the actual situations."

The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- * Arrangements in respect of reporting for duty;
- * Arrangements in respect of release from work;
- * Arrangements in respect of resumption of work (e.g. the number of hours within which employees should resume duty after the warning concerned is cancelled, and when safety and traffic conditions allow);
- * Arrangements regarding working hours, wages and allowances (e.g. calculation of wages and allowances in respect of reporting for duty and absence); and
- * Special arrangements in respect of essential staff in times of adverse weather.

"Employers should conduct a timely and realistic assessment of whether there is any need for requiring essential staff to report for duty when a typhoon or rainstorm warning is in force. In assessing the need for essential staff, employers should take into account the safety of employees, including the feasibility for employees to travel to and from their workplaces in adverse weather. Employers should also consider the business nature, operational needs and urgency of service, with due regard to the manpower requirements, staffing establishment and individual needs of employees. Employers should require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather or when 'extreme conditions' are in force and the number of essential staff should be kept to the minimum as far as possible. When weather conditions continue to worsen and public transport services are to be suspended shortly, employers should release their staff as soon as practicable.

"When a Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued during working hours, employers should release employees from work in stages as soon as practicable. To ensure the safety of employees and to enable them to arrive home before suspension of public transport services, employees who have mobility problems (for example, pregnant employees or those with disability), employees who rely on transport services which are prone to being affected by adverse weather conditions (for example, ferry services) for commuting to and from work, and those who work in or are living in remote areas (for example, outlying islands) should be given priority to leave. Other employees should be released later in stages according to their travelling distance or the time required for returning home.

"Under special situations, if it is necessary for employees to report for duty under adverse weather conditions, employers should discuss with them in advance the work arrangements and contingency measures. If public transport services are suspended or limited when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 (T8) or above is in force, employers should provide safe transport services

for employees travelling to and from workplaces, or grant them an extra travelling allowance.

"As typhoons and rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, for employees who are not able to report for duty or resume work on time due to adverse weather conditions, employers should not withhold their wages, good attendance bonus or allowances without reasons. Employers should enquire into the reasons and give due consideration to the exceptional circumstances in each case and should not penalise or dismiss the employee concerned rashly," he said.

The spokesman also reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

Employers should also note that they have an obligation to provide and maintain a safe working environment for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

"If employees are required to work in times of typhoons and rainstorms, employers should ensure that the risks at work are reduced as far as reasonably practicable," the spokesman said.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for death or injury incurred when employees are travelling by a direct route from their residence to their workplace, or from their workplace back to their residence after work, four hours before or after working hours on a day when T8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

The LD has revised the "Code of Practice in Times of Typhoons and Rainstorms", which outlines the major principles, the framework, the reference guidelines and information on relevant legislation for reference. The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).

Police charged 45 persons following illegal assembly in Western District

An illegal assembly was held in Western District on Hong Kong Island on July 28, during which the protestors blocking roads along Connaught Road West and Des Voeux Road West near Western Street. They set up roadblocks by umbrellas, wooden planks, bamboo sticks and railings; pried up pavement

bricks, demolished roadside fences, damaged street signs and lampposts as well as attacked Police officers at scene with lethal weapons such as bricks and sharpened iron rods.

Although Police have repeatedly warned the protestors who charged the police cordon lines to leave immediately and that they were participating in an illegal assembly, the protestors refused to leave and continue to perform various peace-breaching acts and attacked Police officers. After repeated warnings were ignored, Police took dispersal action at about 7 pm to restore social order.

During the operation, Police arrested 49 persons comprising 32 men and 17 women, aged between 16 and 41. The case has been followed by Crime Headquarters of Hong Kong Island.

After investigation and seeking legal advice, Police charged 44 persons for rioting. Among them, a 33-year-old man was also charged with assaulting police officer. Separately, a 24-year-old man was charged with possession of offensive weapons. All of them will appear in the Eastern Magistrates' Court tomorrow (July 31).

The remaining two men were released on bail pending further investigation, while another two persons were temporarily released.

Police stressed that active investigation is underway and will not rule out the possibility of further arrest.