

Hong Kong Customs combats suspected illicit cigarette distribution activities in Sham Shui Po (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (April 1) conducted an anti-illicit cigarette operation in Sham Shui Po to fight against criminals involved in illicit cigarette distribution in the district. About 13 000 suspected illicit cigarettes, with an estimated market value of about \$58,000 and a duty potential of about \$43,000, were seized.

Early this morning, while conducting an investigation at an illicit cigarettes black spot in Pei Ho Street, Sham Shui Po, Customs found a non-local man engaging in suspected illicit cigarettes distribution activities. Customs officers immediately arrested the 38-year-old man, who claimed to be unemployed, and seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes from two foam boxes and a nylon bag.

The arrested man was charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies" and will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (April 2).

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multipronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

Customs stresses that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette 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/).

