

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at mobile repair shops

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 19) arrested four salespersons suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices in the supply of mobile repair services and selling counterfeit mobile phone accessories, violating the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), at three mobile repair shops in Mong Kok.

Customs earlier received information alleging that a salesperson of a mobile repair shop in Mong Kok was suspected of engaging in aggressive commercial practices to coerce customers into procuring repair services as well as making false claims on the repair items.

After investigation, it was revealed that the salesperson claimed to a customer that a component of a mobile phone had been replaced without the consent of the customer in the course of supplying mobile repair service. The salesperson then threatened the customer to accept the repair item for the reason that data inside the mobile would be lost. However, replacement of the component as claimed had not been carried out at last.

Customs officers yesterday conducted an operation and arrested four men aged between 21 and 38. A batch of suspected counterfeit mobile phone accessories with an estimated market value of about \$32,000 was also seized.

Investigation is ongoing and the four arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers should also procure services at reputable traders and enquire about the service details before making a transactional decision.

Under the TDO, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer, or any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark, commits an offence. Also, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair a consumer's freedom of choice or conduct, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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