

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices by travel agency

Hong Kong Customs today (February 20) arrested a male director and a female staff member of a travel agency who were suspected of having applied a false trade description in the course of providing air ticket pre-order services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information from members of the public that, after ordering air tickets through a travel agency, they were informed that the tickets could not be provided. A female staff member advised them to purchase the air tickets themselves, assuring them that the agency would cover the costs. However, the complainants failed to retrieve the costs, and the total amount involved was approximately \$250,000.

After an investigation, Customs officers conducted an enforcement operation and arrested a 75-year-old male director and a 62-year-old female staff member of the company.

The investigation is ongoing, and the two arrested persons were held for questioning.

Customs reminded traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to purchase services from reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied or offered to be supplied to a consumer 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 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).