

# Hong Kong Customs raids suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Kwai Chung industrial building (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (February 27) raided a suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in Kwai Chung and seized about 300 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$1.4 million and a duty potential of about \$1 million.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation conducted in Kwai Chung yesterday afternoon, Customs officers intercepted a suspicious local woman outside an industrial building unit on Castle Peak Road. About 37 000 suspected illicit cigarettes were seized from her trolley, and the woman, aged 71 and claiming to be unemployed, was immediately arrested. Later, Customs officers escorted the woman to the industrial building unit for a search and further seized about 270 000 suspected illicit cigarettes.

Customs will continue to trace the source of the illicit cigarettes, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

The arrested woman has been charged with "dealing with goods to which the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies" and will appear at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts on March 21.

Customs will also continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at the 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.

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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](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefsc.gov.hk/form/ced002/en](http://eform.cefsc.gov.hk/form/ced002/en)).

