

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (July 6) seized about 2.4 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$6.5 million and a duty potential of about \$4.6 million at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound.

Through intelligence analysis, Customs officers selected a seaborne refrigerated container, declared as carrying dragon fruit, arriving in Hong Kong from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, for inspection.

Upon inspection, Customs officers found the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes inside 242 cartons mix-loaded with 100 boxes of dragon fruit in the container.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multi-pronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to combat illicit cigarette activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

