

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes worth about \$28 million (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 7.7 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$28 million and a duty potential of about \$19 million at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound on June 2.

Through risk assessment, Customs on that day selected for inspection a 40-foot seaborne container, declared as carrying facial masks, arriving in Hong Kong from Korea. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized the batch of illicit cigarettes inside the container.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs will continue to combat illicit cigarette activities on all fronts through risk assessment and intelligence analysis.

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.

Customs reminds members of the public 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 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

