

Hong Kong Customs sets up first Firearm Detector Dog Team (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (December 15) announced that the first Firearm Detector Dog Team has been set up to further strengthen Customs' capability on the front line in combating the smuggling of firearms, firearm component parts and ammunition into Hong Kong for the sake of preventing terrorist activities, protecting the lives of citizens and safeguarding national security.

The Customs Canine Force has all along been adopting a long-term development strategy along the directions of diversification and professionalisation, so that the team's size and function are able to meet the enforcement needs of the department. Following the successful self-breeding of working dogs last year, Customs has trained firearm detector dogs and dog handlers on its own for the first time to expand Customs detector dogs' abilities to intercept illegal firearms, firearm component parts and ammunition, on top of searching for three types of items, namely drugs, explosives and cash, which marked a major milestone of its canine profession.

The Deputy Head of Land Boundary Command (Customs Canine Force), Ms Joy Wong, said at a press conference today that criminals have dismantled firearms into parts and falsely declared them as items such as machine parts and toys to smuggle them into Hong Kong in postal parcels or express cargoes in recent years.

She continued that the Firearms and Ammunition (Declaration of Arms) (Amendment) Regulation 2021 has taken effect on November 1 this year and the legal definition of firearm component parts has been amended to provide a more complete regulatory regime. After the amendment, genuine firearm component parts including the barrel, chamber, cylinder, frame, body, receiver, breech block, bolt or other mechanism for containing the pressure of discharge at the rear of a chamber have fallen within the definition of "firearms". The firearm detector dogs have been trained to sniff out genuine firearm component parts as well as whole firearms and the related bullets in compliance with the enforcement of the amended regulation.

The newly formed Firearm Detector Dog Team comprises four sub-teams, with each having a dog handler and a detector dog. The firearm detector dogs are able to assist Customs officers to carry out efficient and effective assessment on a huge amount of postal parcels and express cargoes. Coupled with intelligence analysis, risk management and various types of advanced equipment and facilities, Customs' enforcement capability and clearance efficiency at the control points will be greatly enhanced.

The Firearm Detector Dog Team has been deployed to support the cargo clearance work at various control points to tremendously strengthen the

overall detection capability of Customs and to provide full assistance to the officers in performing their duties as a gatekeeper of Hong Kong in anti-smuggling, counter-terrorism and protection of national security.

