

Hong Kong Customs smashes counterfeit mooncake syndicate (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an operation on September 18 and smashed a counterfeit mooncake syndicate in Yuen Long. About 340 boxes of suspected counterfeit mooncakes and about 200 mooncake redemption vouchers with suspected false trade descriptions were seized, with an estimated market value of about \$90,000 in total.

Customs earlier received information alleging that a restaurant was suspected of selling counterfeit mooncakes and mooncake redemption vouchers with false trade descriptions. The restaurant also misled customers that they could redeem mooncakes with the vouchers at a designated cake shop and its branches.

Upon investigation, Customs conducted an enforcement action on the said date, during which about 170 boxes of suspected counterfeit mooncakes and 200 mooncake redemption vouchers with suspected false trade descriptions were seized. A female company director, a male person-in-charge and a female staff member of the restaurant, aged between 39 and 51, were arrested.

On the same day, Customs raided a storehouse in Yuen Long where about 170 boxes of suspected counterfeit mooncake were further seized. A 77-year-old male person-in-charge of the storehouse was arrested. He is believed to be the mastermind of the syndicate.

An investigation is still ongoing and all arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

With the Mid-Autumn Festival around the corner, Customs will enhance patrols and combat the sale of festive counterfeit food items and goods.

Customs appeals to consumers to purchase at shops with a good reputation and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agencies if the authenticity of the product is in doubt.

Customs also reminds traders to be cautious and prudent in merchandising since selling counterfeit goods or goods with false trade descriptions is a serious crime and liable to criminal sanctions.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, it is an offence to sell or possess for sale any goods with a forged trade mark, or to supply goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or to possess any goods for sale with a false trade description. Upon conviction, offenders shall be liable to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for five years and a fine of \$500,000.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

