

Hong Kong Customs smashes counterfeiting syndicate (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted a special operation on January 27 and smashed a counterfeiting syndicate in Sham Shui Po. An upstairs showroom-cum-storage area and two storage facilities of suspected counterfeit goods were raided. A total of about 18 000 suspected counterfeit goods including handbags, wallets and shoes with an estimated market value of over \$11 million were seized.

According to earlier intelligence analysis, Customs suspected some counterfeit products were being sold in an upstairs showroom in Sham Shui Po. After in-depth investigation with the assistance of a trademark owner, Customs officers took enforcement action on January 27 and raided an upstairs showroom-cum-storage area and two storage facilities where the batch of suspected counterfeit goods were seized.

The showroom-cum-storage area and the two storage facilities were situated on different levels in the same commercial building. The showroom was not open to local people and only served foreign helpers.

During the operation, one man and four women were arrested, including three syndicate heads and two members, aged from 35 to 42.

Investigation is ongoing.

With the imminent arrival of Lunar New Year, Customs will continue to step up inspection and enforcement to combat the sale of counterfeit goods.

Customs reminds consumers to procure goods at reputable shops and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs also reminds traders to be cautious and prudent in merchandising, since the sale of counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal liability.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

