

Hong Kong Customs special operation combats online sale of counterfeit perfumes and skincare products (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a special enforcement operation on May 28 and yesterday (June 5), and detected two cases of selling suspected counterfeit goods on online platforms. A total of about 700 items of suspected counterfeit goods, including perfumes and skincare products, with an estimated market value of about \$300,000, were seized, and two persons were arrested.

Customs earlier received information from the public and a trademark owner alleging that counterfeit skincare products were put on sale through online platforms. Customs officers then made use of a big-data analytics system to conduct risk assessments and analyses, and through cyber patrols, discovered that another account on an online platform was also selling suspected counterfeit perfumes and skincare products. An investigation was then launched.

After a comprehensive investigation and with the assistance of the trademark owner, Customs officers took enforcement actions on the aforementioned dates and searched two residential units in Mei Foo and Kwun Tong, resulting in the seizure of the batch of suspected counterfeit goods.

During the operation, two women aged 43 and 31 were arrested.

The investigation is ongoing, and the arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation. The likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out. Also, Customs is looking into the source of the goods involved in the cases, and samples will be sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

Customs reminds consumers to purchase goods at reputable shops or online shops and to avoid conducting transaction with suspicious traders. They should check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs has been striving to protect consumer rights and carries out inspections in the market and on the Internet from time to time. Moreover, Customs officers use a big-data analytics system to carry out risk assessments and analyses to verify whether online shops have complied with the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO) with a view to safeguarding the interests of consumers during online purchases.

Under the TDO, 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 counterfeiting activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

