

Hong Kong Customs special operation combats sale of counterfeit medicines (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted a special operation in Tai Po, Causeway Bay and Jordan between February 13 and 27 to combat the sale of counterfeit medicines and seized about 14 000 items of suspected counterfeit medicines with an estimated market value of about \$850,000.

Customs earlier received information alleging that suspected counterfeit medicines were put on sale in the markets. After an in-depth investigation and with the assistance of the trademark owners, Customs officers took enforcement action and raided three medicine shops in Tai Po, Causeway Bay and Jordan, seizing the batch of suspected counterfeit medicines. With the assistance of officers from the Department of Health, Customs also seized a quantity of suspected controlled medicines at the medicine shop in Jordan which does not have the trader licence.

During the operation, Customs arrested four men, aged between 31 and 48, including one shop proprietor and three salespersons.

All arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation. An investigation is ongoing, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out. Samples of the suspected counterfeit goods involved in the case will be sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

Customs will continue to step up inspection and enforcement to vigorously combat the sale of different kinds 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. Also, traders should be cautious and prudent in merchandising since the sale of counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

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 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/en).

