

Incoming passenger convicted and jailed for dealing with duty-not-paid cigarettes (with photo)

An incoming female passenger was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and fined \$2,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (March 7) for possession of duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare to Customs Officers, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

Customs intercepted an incoming 49-year-old female passenger at the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point yesterday (March 6) for Customs clearance. There were 141 sticks and 240 sticks of duty-not-paid cigarettes uncovered inside the front pocket of a hoodie carried by the female passenger and in a tailor-made jacket she was wearing respectively. Later, another 320 sticks of duty-not-paid cigarettes were found wrapped around her waist, and 480 sticks of duty-not-paid cigarettes were seized underneath the leggings she was wearing. A total of 1 181 duty-not-paid cigarettes, with an estimated market value of about \$5,300 and a duty potential of about \$3,900, were seized in the case. The female passenger was subsequently arrested.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences. Customs reminds members of the public that under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who deals with, possesses, sells or buys illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette 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).

