

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

â€‹An incoming female passenger was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined \$2,000 at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (June 14) for possessing duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare them to Customs officers, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

Customs officers intercepted the 35-year-old incoming female passenger at Hong Kong International Airport yesterday (June 13) and seized about 44 200 duty-not-paid cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$181,000 and a duty potential of about \$146,000 from her personal baggage. The passenger was subsequently arrested.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences.

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/).

