

Sole proprietor of pharmacy convicted of supplying surgical masks with false trade descriptions

A sole proprietor of a pharmacy was convicted and fined \$2,000 today (September 23) at Eastern Magistrates' Courts for supplying surgical masks to which a false trade description had been applied, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Under the large-scale territory-wide spot check and enforcement operation codenamed "Guardian" on common protective items, Customs officers earlier test-purchased a type of surgical mask bearing the marking "CSi" at a pharmacy in Wan Chai. The pharmacy's sole proprietor claimed at that time that the masks were manufactured in Guangzhou.

After investigation, Customs confirmed that the manufacturing place of the masks was Hong Kong, which was different from what had been declared.

Under the TDO, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, or 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.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to purchase products from reputable shops.

Customs attaches great importance to the trade description and safety aspects of surgical masks. The "Guardian" operation is ongoing to ensure that the surgical masks being sold in the market comply with the TDO and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO). Law enforcement action will be taken immediately if any suspected violations are detected.

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