

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 420 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$1.18 million and a duty potential of about \$810 000 in Tuen Mun yesterday (January 3).

Customs officers conducted an anti-illicit cigarette operation in Tuen Mun yesterday afternoon and found the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes inside a container at an open-air car park.

Two men, aged 28 and 16 respectively, were arrested. A private car suspected to be in connection with the case has also been detained.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying 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 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Regional flag day today](#)

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (January 4). They are, on Hong Kong Island, RainLily; in Kowloon, Hong Kong Adventure Corps Limited; and in the New Territories, Society for the Welfare of the Autistic Persons, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people distinguish between the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on January 4 is as follows:

Region	Name of Organisation	Colour of Collection Bag	Colour of Flag
Hong Kong Island	RainLily	Dark Purple	Blue
Kowloon	Hong Kong Adventure Corps Limited	Red	Green
New Territories	Society for the Welfare of the Autistic Persons	Yellow	Orange

For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678. Information on flag days is available at the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_whatsnew) and the GovHK portal (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing contact information of the flag-selling organisations and information on the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_recentlyap). For enquiries about the detailed flag-selling arrangements, please contact the individual flag-selling organisations.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the Public Subscription Permit issued by the SWD have also been uploaded to the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/fundraising).

If any flag day activity is suspected to be fraudulent, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

[Hong Kong Customs detects two passenger drug trafficking cases in same flight \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 2) detected two cases of drug trafficking by passengers from the same flight at Hong Kong International Airport. About 4 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$4 million were seized in total.

Two male passengers arrived in Hong Kong on the same flight from Addis

Ababa, Ethiopia yesterday. During customs clearance, about 3.2kg of suspected cocaine were found concealed inside the false compartment of a checked-in suitcase of the first male passenger.

As well, Customs officers suspected the second male passenger to have dangerous drugs concealed inside his body cavity. He was escorted to hospital for examination and later discharged about 800 grams of suspected cocaine.

The two persons connected with the cases were arrested and have each been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. They will appear at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (January 4).

Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment approach and focus on selecting passengers from high-risk regions for clearance. The department will also further step up enforcement actions before the Chinese New Year holiday with a view to combat transnational drug trafficking activities effectively.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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



[Government statement \(2\)](#)

In response to media enquiries on a further social media post issued by a civil service staff union, a Government spokesman made the following statement today (January 3):

The Government reiterated that the staff union concerned should not ignore the facts and make unscrupulous criticisms against the Police's

decision to end the procession on January 1 earlier. The fact is that the Police made the decision having regard to public safety considerations.

The Government would also like to reiterate that, as clearly stated in the Civil Service Code, civil servants are required to comply with political neutrality. No matter what their own political beliefs are, civil servants shall serve the Chief Executive and the Government of the day with total loyalty and to the best of their ability. When civil servants express their views, they should ensure that their views would not give rise to any conflict of interest with their official duties, and would not be perceived as compromising the important principle of maintaining impartiality and political neutrality which they should uphold when discharging their duties. If civil servants breach the code, the Government will deal with it in a serious manner in accordance with the established mechanism.

At this difficult moment, the Government urges all civil servants to stay united and render full support to the Government's priority task of ending chaos and violence.

[CHP provides latest information on cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan \(with photo\)](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 3) received notification from the National Health Commission (NHC) on the latest information of the cluster of pneumonia cases detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province. The public is again urged to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

According to information from the NHC, a number of viral pneumonia cases with unknown cause have been identified since last December through medical surveillance. Symptoms were mainly fever while a few had presented with shortness of breath. As at 8am today, 44 cases have been reported. Among them, 11 cases were in serious condition and the remaining were in stable condition. All patients are receiving treatment in isolation. While 121 close contacts are under medical surveillance, contact tracing of close contacts is still ongoing.

Epidemiological investigations revealed that some patients are business operators at a local seafood market in Wuhan. For the time being, no obvious human-to-human transmission has been observed and no healthcare workers have been infected. While the causative pathogen and cause of infection are still under investigation, influenza viruses, avian influenza viruses and other common respiratory diseases such as adenovirus have been ruled out as the

cause.

In response to the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, the CHP has enhanced surveillance since December 31 last year. Taking into consideration of the latest situation, the CHP has revised the criteria for surveillance today to widen the scope. Doctors are requested to report to the CHP if they encounter patients with fever and acute respiratory symptoms, or pneumonia symptoms; and who had visited Wuhan (regardless of whether they have visited wet markets or seafood markets there) within 14 days prior to the onset of the illness.

The CHP will continue to maintain close liaison with the NHC and closely monitor the latest development of cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan. The CHP will timely update the surveillance criteria and testing strategies in accordance with the latest situation. A dedicated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) has also been set up to provide relevant information and health advice. To address the public's concern, the CHP will announce the details of cases reported under enhanced surveillance (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/enhanced_sur_pneumonia_wuhan_eng.pdf) on the above webpage daily to enhance transparency.

Meanwhile, the CHP has strengthened port health measures. Starting from today, additional thermal imaging system has been put in place in the Hong Kong International Airport dedicated for checking body temperature of inbound travellers from Wuhan. Additional manpower has also been assigned to Hong Kong West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link for checking body temperature of inbound travellers. Those with relevant symptoms and travel history will be immediately referred to public hospitals for isolation, treatment and follow-up.

The CHP has also enhanced health promotion for travellers at all boundary control points through broadcast, distribution of pamphlets and display of posters. Inbound and outbound travellers are reminded to take heed of preventive measures and maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. When travelling outside Hong Kong, the public should avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. Travellers are reminded to wear surgical masks and seek medical attention if present with fever or respiratory symptoms, and reveal their travel history to doctors.

The DH will again send letters to all doctors and private hospitals today, reminding them to pay attention and refer cases meeting enhanced surveillance.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing;

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel or hand dryer. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- avoid touching animals, poultry/birds or their droppings;
- avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- if feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if having a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- after returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if having a fever or other symptoms, inform the doctor of recent travel history and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.

