

[Press Releases](#)**Customs smashes cases of selling of suspected counterfeits on Internet platforms (with photo)****7 May 2014**

The Customs and Excise Department stepped up enforcement action to combat the sale of suspected counterfeit goods through Internet platforms and smashed 43 cases from February to April this year.

Customs conducted test-buy operations and investigations targeting the sale of suspected counterfeit goods on Internet platforms, including auction sites and social networks. In the operations, Customs officers seized 11 796 items of suspected counterfeit goods with a total value of about \$1.12 million. A total of 45 persons, including 21 men and 24 women aged from 14 to 58, were arrested.

The Divisional Commander (Intellectual Property Technology Crime Investigation), Mr Guy Fong, said at a press briefing today (May 7) that offenders usually displayed photos of counterfeit goods on auction sites or social networks, and contacted the buyers through telephone, email or social networks. The goods would be delivered by post, courier delivery or face-to-face delivery. The quantity of goods involved in each case was rather small, revealing that the sale of suspected counterfeit goods was a small-scale side business.

Mr Fong pointed out that two trends were observed in the sale of counterfeit goods on Internet platforms. First, there was a shift in the sale of counterfeit goods from auction sites to social networks. In the first four months of 2014, the number of cases involving the sale of suspected counterfeit goods on social networks was increasing as compared to 2013. Second, there was an increasing number of young persons arrested. During the past four months, 14 of the arrested persons were students, and the youngest arrested person was aged 14.

Mr Fong appealed to members of the public to respect intellectual property rights and not to sell or purchase counterfeit goods. Mr Fong specifically appealed to young people not to sell counterfeit goods for quick money. Selling counterfeit goods may result in a criminal record that can ruin one's future prospects. Mr Fong also reminded parents to guide their children and prevent them from committing crimes. Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person selling goods bearing a forged trademark commits a criminal offence. Once convicted, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for five years and a fine of \$500,000.

Suspected counterfeiting activities can be reported via Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182.



Customs has stepped up enforcement action to combat the sale of suspected counterfeit goods on Internet platforms. Picture shows suspected counterfeit goods seized.

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