



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

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TWO EX- EMPLOYEES OF LICENSED WAREHOUSE CONVICTED FOR CUSTOMS OFFENCES

Singapore, 2 October 2023 – The State Courts convicted a male Singaporean, See Thiam Cheng Edward (施添清) (“See”), 52, and a female Singaporean, Chin Seok Rui (陳淑瑞) (“Chin”), 35, on 25 September 2023 and 26 September 2023 respectively for customs offences. See was sentenced to 33 months’ imprisonment and a fine of \$890,000. Chin’s sentencing is scheduled for October 2023. Both were employed by Warehouse Logistics Net Asia Pte Ltd (“WLNA”) at the time of the offences.

2 See, the then general manager of WLNA, pleaded guilty to two charges of illegal removal of uncustomed goods¹ and one charge of importation of uncustomed goods. Four charges of illegal removal of uncustomed goods, four charges of abetting others to falsify import permits, two charges of causing an incorrect declaration to be made, and one charge of importation of uncustomed goods were taken into consideration during the sentencing.

3 Chin pleaded guilty to three charges of fraudulent evasion of duty and Goods & Services Tax (GST). Three charges of fraudulent evasion of duty and GST, four charges of making an incorrect declaration, and two charges of falsifying import permits will be taken into consideration during her sentencing.

¹ Uncustomed goods refer to duty-suspended or duty-unpaid goods involved in the offences.

Details on Chin's Case

4 In October 2020, Singapore Customs commenced investigations into WLNA after an importer reported that duty payment permits were obtained but subsequently cancelled despite the importer making duty and GST payments to WLNA.

5 Investigations revealed that between October 2017 and December 2019, Chin applied for 25 duty payment permits to authorise the release of 7,272 bottles of duty-suspended liquor from the Licensed Warehouse² ("LW") operated by WLNA to the importer. The importer paid the duty and GST in cash to Chin and collected the liquor for sale in Singapore.

6 Chin then cancelled the duty payment permits with Customs and pocketed the duty and GST payments by the importer. To give the impression that the duty-suspended liquor was exported and hence no duty and GST were payable, Chin included the 7,272 bottles of duty-suspended liquor across 24 export permits which she had applied for other customers. She also edited some of the export permits to remove the additional duty-suspended liquors before passing these edited documents to the customers. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to \$162,986 and \$72,748 respectively.

Details on See's Case

7 Further investigations revealed that between May 2018 and March 2019, See had collected the duty and GST payments from an importer for the release of 85,764 bottles of duty-suspended liquor and 79,993 cans of duty-suspended beer for domestic consumption – without applying for duty payment permits and making the necessary duty and GST payments to Singapore Customs. The total duty and GST unpaid amounted to \$136,250 and \$12,078 respectively.

² Licensed Warehouses are premises licensed by Singapore Customs for storage of dutiable goods with the duty and GST suspended pending re-export or removal for local consumption. Duty and GST are payable if the goods are to be removed from the Licensed Warehouse for local consumption.

8 Additionally, during a full inspection of the stocks in the LW operated by WLNA, 3,696 cans of duty-suspended beer could not be accounted for. See admitted that some cans were released for WLNA staff to consume during a company event. He claimed that the rest had expired and were no longer fit for consumption and were disposed by WLNA staff in December 2018 and September 2019 without notifying Singapore Customs. While See knew that Singapore Customs' approval and supervision were required before WLNA could dispose the cans of duty-suspended beer, he instructed WLNA's staff to proceed with the destruction. The duty and GST involved amounted to \$16,853 and \$1,329 respectively.

9 Other than alcoholic beverages, See had also abused WLNA's LW facility for his own benefits. Sometime prior to June 2018, See was approached by an unknown man to import and store 25,000 cartons of cigarettes in the LW operated by WLNA. The man asked See to only declare the importation of 20,000 cartons of the cigarettes. The undeclared 5,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were subsequently removed from the LW and released for domestic consumption. See enlisted the assistance of another ex WLNA staff, Tang Choy Foong ("Tang"), a 34-year-old female Singapore Permanent Resident, to make a false declaration that the importation consisted of only 20,000 cartons of cigarettes. In return, See got \$5,000 from the unknown man, and he gave \$2,500 to Tang. The duty and GST evaded amounted to \$427,000 and \$31,394 respectively.

10 WLNA was sentenced to a fine of \$26,300 on 1 December 2022 for one charge of illegal removal of uncustomed goods in relation to the offences mentioned in paragraph 8. WLNA is no longer operating a LW. Another similar charge was taken into consideration during the sentencing. Court proceedings against Tang are ongoing.

Offences and Penalties

11 Any person who is in any way concerned in any fraudulent evasion of duty or GST on imported goods, or in any way concerned in the illegal removal of goods from customs control, shall be liable on conviction to a fine of up to 20 times the amount of

duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to two years, in the case of non-tobacco products.

12 Any person who is in any way concerned in the importation of duty-unpaid tobacco products, shall be liable on conviction to a fine of up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years.

13 Any person who falsifies documents, or makes any declaration which is untrue, incorrect, or incomplete, shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000, or the equivalent of the amount of duty and GST payable, whichever is higher, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.

14 Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg to report these illegal activities.

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About Singapore Customs

Singapore Customs, a lead agency under the Ministry of Finance, protects revenue and facilitates trade. We make trade easy, fair and secure. We ensure compliance with customs regulations and collect taxes and duties on dutiable and taxable goods. We regulate the export of strategic goods and implement Singapore's commitments to some international trade regulations such as the United Nations Security Council Sanctions.

We work closely with other government agencies, industry partners, and international organisations in our mission and operations. With the use of data analytics, digitalisation of processes and various technologies, we continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs processes.

By proactively balancing the intricate requirements of trade facilitation, security and regulatory compliance, Singapore Customs strengthens Singapore's position as a global trade hub trusted by businesses operating in Singapore and foreign trading partners.

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