



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 KASTAM SINGAPURA சிங்கப்பூர் கங்கத்துறை

MEDIA RELEASE

6 October 2022

Singaporean woman fined \$5,500 for fraudulent evasion of GST

A 37-year-old Singaporean woman, Teo Hwee Ling, was sentenced by the State Courts on 6 October 2022 to a fine of \$5,500 for fraudulent evasion of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Facts of the Case

On 1 May 2022, Teo arrived at Changi Airport on a flight from Frankfurt. Before she exited the Arrival Hall, she was stopped by Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers for a check on the items in a paper bag she was carrying. She was subsequently directed to Singapore Customs office where she declared two branded bags for tax payment.

When asked by a Singapore Customs officer to produce the invoices for the two bags, Teo declared that these were gifts from her friend residing in Germany and she had no knowledge of their value. As there was no documentation to establish the value of the bags, Teo provided a verbal declaration of EUR1000 (about \$1,470) and made a GST payment of \$68.20 for the bags after deducting the GST import relief for travellers¹.

¹ Travellers are granted GST import relief on new goods that are purchased overseas and brought into Singapore for their personal use. The relief amount is based on the duration that the traveller has spent outside Singapore. For durations longer than 48 hours, relief of \$500 is granted.

In May 2022, Singapore Customs received information that there were discrepancies in the declaration made by Teo earlier and the actual purchases she made overseas. Teo was asked to report to Singapore Customs for further investigations.

Investigations revealed that Teo had suppressed the value of the two bags which she declared as gifts, when they were Teo's purchases and were valued at about \$5,060. In addition, Teo had also failed to declare five other items, which were valued at about \$9,240, on her return to Singapore on 1 May 2022. These items belonged to her and were brought out of the Arrival Hall without declaration in a luggage.

The GST short-paid on the two under-declared bags was about \$250 and the GST leviable on the five undeclared items was about \$640.

Teo pleaded guilty to one charge of fraudulent evasion of GST amounting to about \$890. One charge of furnishing false information was taken into consideration during the sentencing.

It is the responsibility of all arriving travellers to make accurate and complete declaration of the dutiable and taxable items in their possession for duty and GST payment. Under the Customs Act, any person found guilty of fraudulent evasion of GST will be liable to a fine of up to 20 times the amount of tax evaded and/or be jailed for up to two years.

Refusing to answer questions or knowingly give false information or furnishing false document are serious offences under the Customs Act. Offenders can be fined up to \$5,000 and/or jailed for up to 12 months.

Singapore Customs

6 October 2022

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