

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS STATEMENT

MAN CAUGHT WITH CONTRABAND CIGARETTES HIDDEN IN A STORE ROOM AT THE VOID DECK OF BLK 119 BEDOK NORTH

On 28 July 03, Customs Officers arrested a male Singaporean Chinese, aged 39 for dealing in contraband cigarettes.

On 28 July 03 at about 8 am, officers kept watch of a store room located at the void deck of Block 119 Bedok North Road suspected to be used for storage of duty-unpaid cigarettes. At about 10.40 am, a male Chinese was seen entering the room. About 5 minutes later, officers moved into the room and declared office. A search was then conducted and the officers found 100 cartons x 200 sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes packed in 10 boxes in the store. Upon being questioned, the 39-year-old male Singaporean admitted ownership of the cigarettes. He was arrested and the cigarettes seized.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the male Singaporean bought the duty-unpaid cigarettes from an unknown Malaysian Chinese for \$20.00 per carton. He had intended to sell the cigarettes for a profit at \$25.00 per carton. The offender will be charged in court for dealing in uncustomed cigarettes on 29 July 03. The street value of the cigarettes is \$8300 and the customs duty and GST is \$5,100 and \$282.40.

Storing, keeping or having in possession, conveying or dealing with any duty-unpaid cigarettes are offences under the Customs Act. The offenders may be fined up to \$5,000 or may be prosecuted in Court. Upon conviction by the Court, first time offenders can be fined up to 20 times the duty evaded, or \$5000, whichever is greater. For second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be jailed for up to two years, as well as being fined. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of Goods & Services Tax evaded.

Singapore Customs would like to urge anyone with information on any illegal activities involving duty-unpaid cigarettes to contact the Customs toll-free hotline on 1800-2330000 or the Customs Call Centre at 63552000. Also call us if you know of any person dealing in duty-unpaid cigarettes, either as distributors or sellers or if you have been approached by people who claim that they have cheaper cigarettes for sale.

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28 July 2003