



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS MEDIA RELEASE

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SMOKE OUT ILLEGAL CIGGIES IN BISCUIT TINS - *FIRST OF SUCH CASE UNCOVERED*

The familiar biscuit tins we see at our neighborhood provision shops have now been used to hide illegal cigarettes! As a double protection against detection, the smugglers had cleverly packed sachets of silica gel on top of the cigarettes and affixed the tin cover with paper seal printed with the words “silica gel”. Singapore Customs uncovered this first of its kind case on 16 January 2009. The Customs operation resulted in the seizure of 67,540 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes in 563 biscuits tins and the arrest of two Singaporean men – Mohd Ridzuan Bin Ali and Masazlie Bin Mohamed Salleh (aged 36 and 35). Both men were sentenced on 19 January 2009 to three years’ jail each for dealing with assorted brands of illegal cigarettes. The cigarettes were worth about \$615,000, and total duty and GST involved was \$518,505.

2 On 16 January 2009, Singapore Customs officers conducted a surveillance operation at a warehouse unit at Toh Guan Road. At about 3.00 pm, the officers trailed the suspect bonded truck from the warehouse to a heavy vehicle carpark at Ganges Avenue. Two men alighted from the truck. Officers moved in. On seeing the officers, the two men fled. However, they were eventually arrested along Delta Avenue. In the presence of both the men, officers unlocked the cargo compartment of the truck and found 563 biscuits tins. On opening the tins, officers saw sachets of silica gel, but concealed underneath the sachets were a total of 67,540 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The two men were aware that the biscuit tins contained duty-unpaid cigarettes. They were arrested and charged in court. On 19 January 2009, they pleaded guilty to the charges and were sentenced to three years’ jail each.

3 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. On conviction, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The vehicles used in the commission of such offence are also liable to be forfeited. The public are strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, an offender may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

4 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST should contact the Singapore Customs Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.

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Biscuit tins containing silica gel sachets, who would have thought they contain illegal cigarettes?



And now you see the cigarettes hidden under the silica gels.



563 biscuit tins concealed 67,540 packets of illegal cigarettes.