



JOINT NEWS RELEASE BY IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

DUPLICATING ILLEGAL SMOKES?

The not-so-smart smugglers must have thought that by placing photocopiers and illegal cigarettes in the same container can lead to duplicate smokes. They cannot get more naïve than this, especially not when the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Customs (SC) combine forces to thwart their ruse.

2 On 17 April 2009, officers from the two agencies conducted a joint operation at the Jurong Ports, targeting containers which are suspected to contain contraband/illicit items. At about 6pm, a 40-footer container, declared to contain 'photocopying apparatus', caught the attention of the officers.



3 Trailing the prime mover with the container load to an industrial site in Kallang, SC officers uncovered the haul of illicit cigarettes hidden inside the container with the photocopiers. A total of 6,200 cartons of the illicit cigarettes, with

an estimated street value of \$527,250, were found hidden amongst the photocopying apparatus inside the container. The estimated duty and GST involved are \$419,600 and \$56,400 respectively. This is by far one of the largest haul of contraband cigarettes detected this year.

4 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. Vehicles utilised in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited. The public is strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.



5 As Singapore's first line of defence against terrorist threats, the ICA has a duty to ensure the security and safety of Singapore. In a bid to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in cargo vehicle screenings, the ICA has deployed the new

Integrated Cargo Inspection System (ICIS) at its border checkpoints to detect illicit items disguised as legitimate imports. The ICA has also tightened security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contraband into Singapore. The same methods of concealment used by contraband smugglers may be used by terrorists to smuggle arms and explosives to carry out attacks in Singapore. The ICA would like to advise the public against smuggling unlawful goods into Singapore.

6 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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