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MORE SMOKERS CAUGHT FOR BUYING CONTRABAND CIGARETTES

Demand for contraband cigarettes remains persistent with more smokers getting caught for buying contraband cigarettes. Singapore Customs also seized a higher quantity of illegal cigarettes in 2013.

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inSIGHT

Building a Community through Communication

The World Customs Organisation has designated 2014 as the Year of Communication, where the Customs community focuses on enhancing our communication strategies and worldwide outreach programmes.

Singapore Customs, like other customs administrations, is in the centre of a network of relations involving international trade, national governments, the business sector and other stakeholders. It is crucial that we work closely with others to share information, and protect the integrity of the supply chain.

In this issue, we highlight the 2013 Singapore Customs enforcement results. Due to the close cooperation between our officers and counterparts in other agencies, we have kept the contraband cigarette situation in check. Keeping close tabs on the ground has helped officers uncover the new, creative ways peddlers and smugglers have come up with to evade detection.

Similarly, Customs officers began engaging De Beers' representatives as soon as we learnt about the company's decision to shift the De Beers online auction headquarters to Singapore. Taking into account the company's needs, we granted the company special facilitation to speed up the diamond certification and import/export process. This has led to higher productivity for De Beers.

During the recent International Customs Day, we honoured nine communicators in the agency, whose work with internal and external parties have helped raise the profile of Singapore Customs among the local and international community.

Tan Zi Jie
Editor

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Customs Enforcement Results 2013

More Smokers Caught For Buying Contraband Cigarettes

Demand for contraband cigarettes remains persistent with more smokers getting caught for buying contraband cigarettes. Singapore Customs also seized a higher quantity of illegal cigarettes in 2013.

PERSISTENT DEMAND FOR CONTRABAND CIGARETTES

The number of smokers caught for buying contraband cigarettes went up from 6,248 in 2012 to 6,400 in 2013, an increase of 2.4 per cent.

But Singapore Customs continues to take firm action to keep the demand in check.

MORE CONTRABAND CIGARETTES SEIZED IN 2013

With syndicates smuggling larger quantities of contraband cigarettes to meet the persistent demand, Singapore Customs intensified enforcement efforts and collaboration with other enforcement agencies (such as the Immigration &

Checkpoints Authority and the Singapore Police Force) to curb the supply of contraband cigarettes.

The quantity of contraband cigarettes seized increased by 93.3 per cent – from 1.5 million packets in 2012 to 2.9 million packets seized in 2013.

Revenue collected from the sale of duty-paid cigarettes continues to show an upward trend, increasing 4.9 per cent from \$932 million in 2012 to \$978 million in 2013.

Overall, the total number of cigarette offenders caught inland and at Singapore’s checkpoints saw a decrease of 5.1 per cent, from 28,502 offenders in 2012 to 27,041 offenders in 2013.

Singapore Customs smashed four contraband cigarette syndicates last year.

Two of these syndicates had attempted to smuggle more than 10,000 cartons of contraband cigarettes into Singapore, by falsely declaring the cigarettes as floor and wall tiles and by hiding the cigarettes in specially-constructed fibre tanks.

In an operation last December, Singapore Customs arrested four men and seized 17,393 and eight packets of contraband cigarettes, making this fibre-tank case the second-largest haul of contraband cigarettes last year.

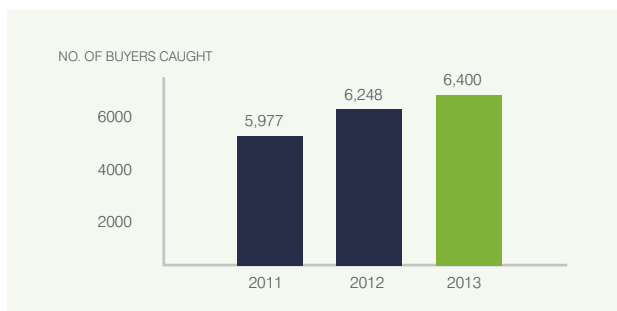
In 2013, a total of 398 peddlers were caught for selling contraband cigarettes. Read the stories on the next page to find out how Singapore Customs stays on top of offenders’ new methods of operations.

TIGHTER REGULATORY MEASURES, INCREASED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

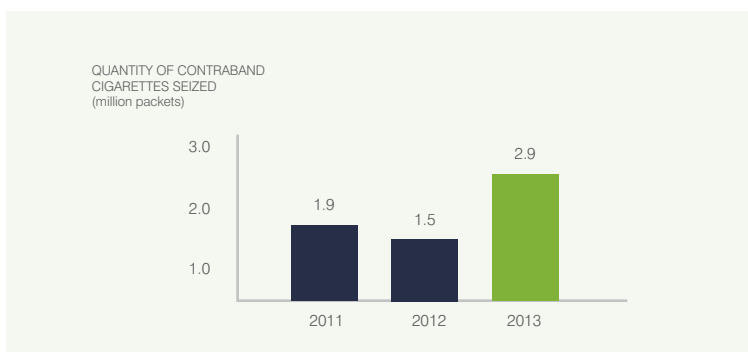
In March 2013, Singapore Customs implemented a revised ‘SDPC’ (Singapore Duty-Paid Cigarette) mark for all cigarettes sold in Singapore. The revised mark features a series of vertical bars around the cigarette stick, allowing enforcement officers and the public to better visibly differentiate duty-paid cigarettes from contraband cigarettes.

We also continued to engage the public last year. More than 200 anti-contraband cigarette talks and road shows were held at schools, foreign-worker dormitories and in the heartlands to raise public awareness about the contraband cigarette situation and to encourage the public to play a part by reporting such illegal activities.

Number of Smokers Caught for Buying Contraband Cigarettes



Quantity of Contraband Cigarettes Seized



DROP IN LIQUOR AND FUEL GAUGE OFFENCES

Other customs offences such as liquor and fuel gauge cases saw a decrease in 2013.

The number of liquor offenders decreased 35.3 per cent, from 1,951 offenders in 2012 to 1,263 offenders in 2013. The majority of these cases were minor offences committed by travellers coming through Singapore's checkpoints.

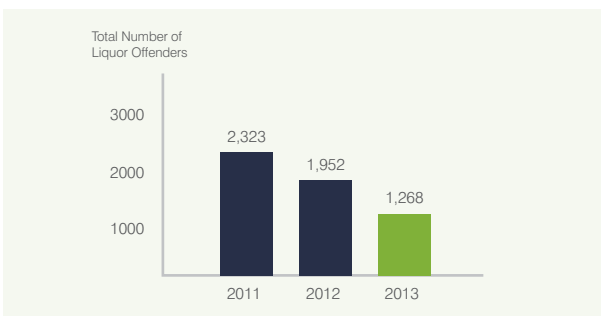
In April 2013, a joint operation by Singapore Customs and the Singapore Police Force crushed an adulterated liquor syndicate. Adulterated liquor refers to liquor that have been illicitly tampered with.

504 bottles of adulterated liquor and 63 jerry cans (approximately 2,130 litres) containing adulterated liquor, related counterfeit paraphernalia, as well as production equipment were seized. Two Malaysian and three Singaporean men have been charged for their involvement. Court proceedings are ongoing.

Singapore-registered motor vehicles must have at least three-quarter tank of petrol when departing Singapore. On 1 January 2012, the three-quarter tank rule was extended to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) tanks of motor vehicles.

For fuel gauge offences, four offenders were prosecuted in 2013, down from 17 in 2012 and 14 in 2011. The fall in number prosecuted suggests that the public has become more aware of the stern penalties they face, should they flout the law.

Number of Liquor Offenders



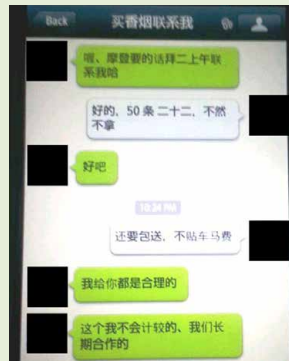
Number of Persons Prosecuted for Fuel Gauge Offences



Customs Enforcement Results 2013

Customs Nets Chatting Peddlers

Singapore Customs has observed a trend of peddlers using instant messaging platform WeChat to source for buyers.



A screenshot of a conversation between a peddler and buyer of contraband cigarettes on WeChat. They are discussing the price, quantity and date of transaction.

WeChat is a mobile text and voice-messaging application that allows users to exchange texts, photos, videos and contact information. Offenders typically use WeChat to source for buyers. When a deal is made, the contraband cigarettes will be delivered to the buyer.

Singapore Customs observed this emerging trend and kept a close watch. We mounted eight operations to clamp down on such illegal activities last year.

In total, 11 men and two women were nabbed for selling contraband cigarettes on WeChat. A total of 1,740 cartons of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes worth more than \$169,000 were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded were more than \$137,000.

12 offenders were sentenced by the court for their involvement in contraband cigarettes to jail terms ranging from six weeks to 10 months, and fines ranging from \$1,100 to \$72,000. Investigations are ongoing for the remaining offender.

In one such operation, three male Chinese nationals – Wang Shuang Qun, 32; Wang Baoqun, 34; and Li Zhong Wei, 30 – were observed to be selling contraband cigarettes on WeChat. Wang Shuang Qun was caught by enforcement officers when he was on his delivery run. For his role, he was sentenced to 10 months' jail and fined \$1,100. Wang Baoqun was sentenced to six weeks' jail, and Li was sentenced to nine months' jail and a court fine of \$2,000. A total of 411 cartons and six packets of contraband cigarettes were seized in this operation.

Customs Enforcement Results 2013

More Caught Using Luxury Cars to Smuggle Contraband Cigarettes

In 2013, more offenders were caught for smuggling illegal cigarettes into Singapore using luxury cars.

Last year, 15 offenders were caught for such attempts to smuggle contraband cigarettes, compared to just four offenders in 2012.

These offenders concealed the contraband cigarettes in modified compartments of their luxury cars. They assumed that luxury vehicles would less likely be checked by enforcement officers at the checkpoints.

In 2013, a total of 2,642 cartons and four packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes valued at more than \$250,000 were recovered from various compartments of luxury cars – including the seats, fuel tank, spare tyre and engine compartments – by enforcement officers. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded \$208,000.

Among the 15 offenders caught in 2013, 11 were sentenced to between three and 13 months' jail. Their vehicles were also forfeited. Court proceedings are still ongoing for the other four offenders.

In one of these cases, a Singaporean man, Lim Wee Ming, was caught for attempting to smuggle 318 cartons of contraband cigarettes in a Singapore-registered Mercedes-Benz car at the Woodlands Checkpoint. The cigarettes were concealed in various modified compartments of the car. The duty and GST evaded amounted to more than \$24,000.

Investigations revealed that Lim had owed money to an illegal moneylender, who offered him the option of smuggling contraband cigarettes to settle his debt.

Smuggling contraband cigarettes for the illegal moneylender, however, turned out to have far greater consequences for Lim.

By breaking the law, Lim not only failed to clear his debt, he was also sentenced to 10 months' jail for his involvement in smuggling contraband cigarettes. His Mercedes-Benz car was also forfeited by the court.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the modified fuel tank of the Mercedes-Benz car.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the modified back seat of a Nissan Fairlady car.

Simplified Diamond Certification Process

helps De Beers Improve Productivity

With the relocation of its online auction headquarters from Antwerp to Singapore, diamond dealer De Beers needed to move rough diamonds to and from Singapore quickly. To speed up the diamond certification and import/export process, Singapore Customs made special provisions for De Beers so that their goods can be exported within the same day of application.

In November 2013, the De Beers Group of Companies shifted its auction sales platform for rough diamonds from Antwerp, Belgium, to Singapore to cater to the Asian market.

From its Singapore base, De Beers frequently imports and exports rough diamonds to its other auction sales offices in Belgium, Israel, Dubai and Hong Kong for customers' viewing.

STRICT RULES ON ROUGH DIAMOND TRADING

The movement and trade of rough diamonds is governed by a set of stringent regulations under the Kimberley Process Certificate Scheme (KPCS), designed to protect the legitimate diamond industry and prevent the flow of 'conflict diamonds' into the market.

Under the KPCS, to export a shipment of rough diamonds out of Singapore, the exporter will require an accompanying Kimberley Process Certificate issued by Singapore Customs. Permit declarations need to be made via TradeNet and all import and export shipments of rough diamonds have to be inspected by Customs officers at Revenue House, Singapore Customs headquarters.



Photo: De Beers

CATERING TO DE BEERS' SPECIAL NEEDS

To understand how Singapore Customs could help De Beers, Customs officers approached company representatives in April 2013 to find out more about their business operations.

Taking into account the company's need for fast turnaround time for its frequent shipments of rough diamonds, Customs officers exercised creativity with the adoption of on-site inspection of selected shipments and batch certificate applications for the company.

The simplified procedures enabled a faster and more seamless flow of the goods, while not compromising any of the KPCS regulatory requirements. They also helped De Beers save on time and resources.

"The turnaround time between application and receipt of a Kimberley Process Certificate is now less than 12 hours, allowing us to export the products on the same day that the application is made," said Mr Alastair Hunter, Director of Operations at De Beers Auction Sales Singapore. "This enables our customers to receive and view the products in a timely manner."

FASTER, EASIER CERTIFICATION AND INSPECTION PROCESSES

In view of the company's large volume of shipments, Singapore Customs made an exception for its shipments to be randomly inspected at the De Beers office instead of the office of Singapore Customs.

"With the on-site inspection, De Beers was able to avoid transportation issues while maintaining high levels of security for our products," explained Mr Hunter.

In addition, Singapore Customs has allowed De Beers to make batch applications through a spreadsheet document for the Kimberley Process Certificates that accompany the export of rough diamonds.

Usually, each export shipment requires De Beers to file a two-page Kimberley Process Certificate application with Singapore Customs.

With batch applications, De Beers staff can save many man-hours each year.

In addition, Singapore Customs worked with various counterparts to streamline internal practices and cut unnecessary procedures and paperwork.

"Singapore Customs officers have been very consistent and thorough in execution, and are extremely responsive to our requests. They have been integral in establishing the permit processes for De Beers auction sales to operate as efficiently as possible, while fully maintaining the integrity of the import/export procedures and requirements of the KPCS," said Mr Hunter.



Photo: De Beers

ABOUT THE KIMBERLEY PROCESS CERTIFICATION SCHEME

The Kimberley Process is an international initiative by governments, industry and civil society to stem the flow of 'conflict diamonds', which are rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against governments.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) sets out requirements to control rough diamond production and trade. It requires participants to put in place national legislation and institutions; import, export and internal controls; as well as to commit to transparency and the exchange of data. KPCS participants can only trade with other participants who have also met the scheme's minimum requirements, and international shipments of rough diamonds must be accompanied by a Kimberley Process certificate guaranteeing they are 'conflict-free'.

The KPCS entered into force in 2003 and has 54 participants representing 81 countries. Singapore has been a Kimberley Process participant since April 2004, with Singapore Customs designated as the import and export authority and the Ministry of Trade and Industry as the lead agency in Singapore.

Singapore Customs issues the Kimberley Process licence and Kimberley Process certificates in Singapore. A Kimberley Process licence allows a company to import and export rough diamonds and is issued annually. Every shipment of rough diamonds also needs to be accompanied by a Kimberley Process certificate.

Protecting Intellectual Property Rights: Telling Real From Fake

In two separate cases recently, Singapore Customs detained two containers of counterfeit fashion items and 11 containers of empty counterfeit vodka bottles.

Singapore Customs is the authority that oversees border enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in Singapore. This means the agency has the power to detain suspected imports, exports and re-exports of IPR-infringing goods, as stated in the Trade Marks Act and the Copyright Act.

The suspected IPR-infringing goods can be detained by Customs officers, or when the brand owners lodge a written notice to the Director-General of Customs.

As part of the whole-of-government approach to combat trade mark and copyright piracy, Singapore Customs also works closely with the Intellectual Property Rights Branch of the Singapore Police Force, which enforces inland retail-level piracy.

Singapore Customs' enforcement efforts and cooperation with other parties has paid off.

In April 2013, the agency detained over 30,900 counterfeit luxury bags, shoes, wallets and other

fashion items upon notification from one of the brand owners.

Customs officers also detained over 78,000 counterfeit vodka bottles and subsequently released them to the brand owner for destruction in December 2013.

FAKE FASHION ITEMS NETTED

In all, 30,944 articles of counterfeit luxury bags, shoes, belts, wallets, school bags and other fashionable items were detained by Singapore Customs in April 2013. The goods had infringed trade marks such as Louis Vuitton, Furla, Hello Kitty, Hermes, Gucci and Burberry.

Declared as "household goods", the counterfeit items were shipped from China to Singapore in two 40-foot containers.

In late March and early April, Singapore Customs received two lodgements of notice from a brand owner on these containers. The brand owner believed the containers contained items which infringed their trade marks.



30,944 pieces of counterfeit fashion items, infringing the trade marks of Louis Vuitton, Furla, Hello Kitty, Hermes, Gucci and Burberry, were detained by Singapore Customs.



A total of 77,850 counterfeit vodka bottles, 18 boxes of bottle caps and 10 boxes of labels were recovered from 11 containers.

Acting promptly on the information, Customs officers inspected two 40-footer containers which were consigned to a local company on 2 and 4 April. Instead of “household goods”, over 30,900 counterfeit fashion items were discovered. The items were detained immediately.

Singapore Customs also assisted the other five brand owners, whose trade marks were suspected to be infringed, to detain the goods – thereby allowing them to institute civil cases against the local consignee. In all, six brand owners applied successfully to the court for Singapore Customs to further detain the goods in April 2013, in order for their cases to be heard in court.

In December 2013, the case between Furla and the local consignee was concluded. All articles infringing Furla’s trade mark were forfeited to them. For the other five brand owners, the court cases are ongoing.

“The specific information provided by the brand owner enabled Singapore Customs to act swiftly to detain the counterfeited goods at the border,” said Mr Tok Choon Min, Acting Head of Operations Management, Singapore Customs. “This bears testimony to the close working relationship we have with the brand owners in the fight against piracy.”

BOGUS VODKA BOTTLES RETURNED TO BRAND OWNER

In December 2013, Singapore Customs handed over 77,850 empty counterfeit vodka bottles and other items to a brand owner for destruction, following a court order.

Declared as “general cargoes”, the counterfeits were shipped from a neighbouring country to Singapore in eleven 20-foot containers and were intended to be shipped to another country.

When Singapore Customs officers inspected the containers in Keppel Distripark on 6 June 2013, they found 2,595 cartons of counterfeit bottles, 18 boxes of bottle caps and 10 boxes of labels instead – all bearing the name of Smirnoff, a vodka brand. The items, suspected to be used for illegal bottling activities and sale outside Singapore, were immediately detained.

Subsequently, the brand owner applied successfully to the court for the detained items to be forfeited to it for destruction. Singapore Customs handed over the trade mark infringing items to the brand owner’s legal representative on 26 December 2013.

“We do not condone the infringement of trade marks or copyright, especially when the goods involved may potentially pose health or safety risks. We will continue to work closely with brand owners to take appropriate action against such offenders,” said Mr Tok.

Industry ‘Insiders’ to help Meet Business Needs

Companies on Singapore Customs’ schemes and licenses can now enjoy better guidance from their Account Managers, who are familiar with the ins and outs of their industries.

Every company registered under any of Singapore Customs schemes and licenses, such as the Licensed Warehouse Scheme or Secure Trade Partnership programme, has a designated Account Manager from the agency. The Account Manager acts as a single point of contact for the company for all Customs queries and applications.

Following a re-organisation in July 2013, the Client Relations Branch and Schemes & Licensing Branch in Singapore Customs’ Trade Division were merged to form the Schemes & Engagement Branch. To better engage businesses, changes have been made to some companies’ Account Managers.

Each industry will now have its needs served by a group of dedicated Account Managers, who specialise in helping companies and trade associations from that industry. The industry clusters are: logistics, energy and chemicals, electronics and engineering, general consumer goods, pharmaceuticals and lifestyle products and services.

This means Account Managers are better able to understand the industry trends and facilitate the business needs of their customers. Companies will have regular meetings with their Account Manager, who will keep them

updated on the latest Customs news, gather their feedback, review Customs schemes and provide special assistance.

“I can now focus on working with licensees from the logistics industry, and keep track of trends in the industry. My team and I will be able to pick out opportunities and see how we can facilitate our licensees through Singapore Customs schemes, to tap on emerging trends,” said Athena Foo, an Account Manager in the logistics cluster. She works with companies such as Keppel Logistics and Air Market Express.

Adec Thng, who was previously from the Client Relations Branch, is now a contact point for companies which are mainly in the aviation and maritime industries. He said: “The re-organisation gives me greater opportunity to build relationships with companies under my charge. Surely, this will reinforce the strong Customs-Business partnerships we have.”

The Singapore Customs Account Manager also partners his companies to help improve their systems and processes. To further strengthen this function, some changes have been made to the way companies are assessed when they renew or apply to join a Customs scheme or licence.



Find out about the Customs Schemes and Licenses available at www.customs.gov.sg

REFINED TRADEFIRST ASSESSMENT PROCESS

TradeFIRST stands for the Trade Facilitation & Integrated Risk-based System. All companies which apply for Singapore Customs schemes will first be assessed via TradeFIRST, using a single set of assessment criteria. The one-stop assessment framework integrates elements of facilitation, compliance and risk-management, and was introduced in January 2011.

NEW SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR COMPANIES

The first step in the assessment framework involves a company completing a self-assessment checklist.

Taking in feedback from traders, the criteria and scoring components of TradeFIRST was recently reviewed.

The new checklist now has greater transparency and clarity – making it easier for companies to know the requirements they need to fulfil to qualify for certain categories within the TradeFIRST assessment framework.

Companies can also learn about the best supply chain practices they can adopt from the new self-assessment checklist. This can help raise the compliance and supply chain security standards of companies, resulting in reduced regulatory cost and greater Customs facilitation for traders.

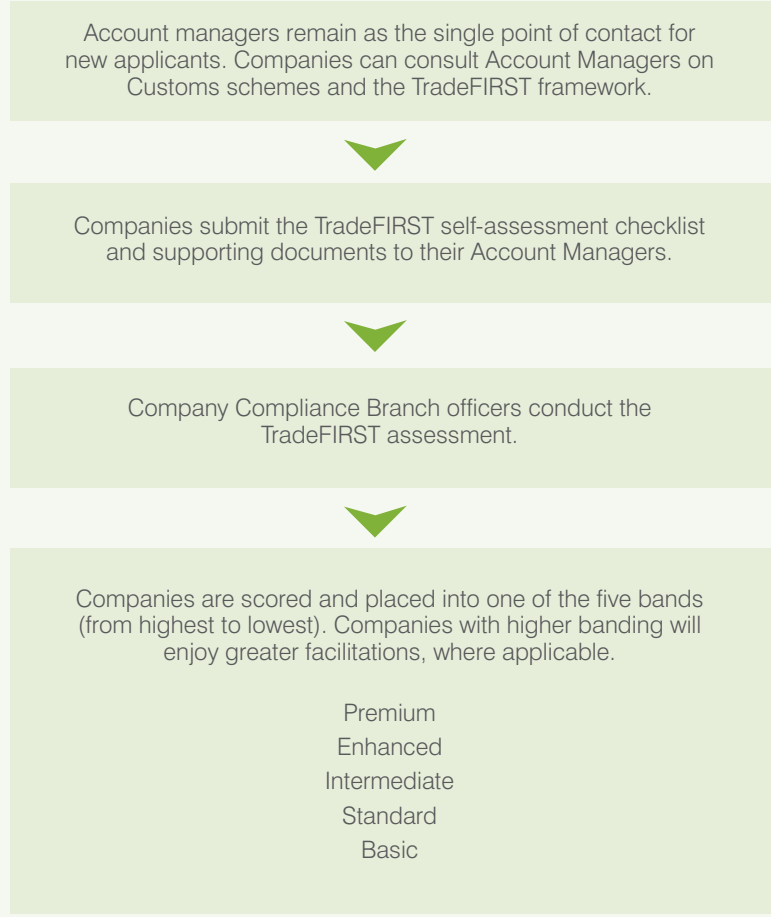
INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT BY CUSTOMS OFFICERS

After companies complete their self-assessment, Customs officers will further assess the companies individually. This assessment is now conducted by Company Compliance Branch officers, who act as independent assessors to ensure that all assessments are consistent and companies are treated fairly.

Typically, company representatives will meet the assessors, who will then conduct a physical inspection of the company premises. Companies need to demonstrate their commitment to securing their supply chain. In particular, assessors look at how companies conduct risk assessment and adopt robust systems and procedures to protect the integrity of their goods.

At the end of the TradeFIRST assessment, companies will also be given pointers by their Account Managers on how to improve their systems. These recommendations can help companies achieve higher scores in their next TradeFIRST renewal.

NEW TRADEFIRST ASSESSMENT PROCESS



Visit www.customs.gov.sg to learn more about TradeFIRST.

NEW STP LICENSEES ON BOARD

Two companies joined the Secure Trade Partnership (STP) scheme in the last quarter of 2013. STP is a voluntary certification programme that encourages companies to adopt robust security measures and contribute to improving the security of the global supply chain.

NAGASE SINGAPORE

Nagase Singapore (Pte) Ltd is a trading company dealing with plastics, electronics, chemicals, medical and life sciences products. In 2012, the Nagase Singapore headquarters acquired Hayashibara, which deals with food, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

"Nagase Singapore is pleased to be certified under the STP programme as it is recognition of our commitment to secure our supply chain. We have received much guidance and support from Singapore Customs during the application process. Not only did they recognise our good practices, they also shared some areas which we could look into," said Mr Kong Wai Leng, Deputy General Manager of Supply Chain Management, Nagase.

SEATRONICS

Seatronics, part of the Acteon Group, specialises in the rental and sale of marine electronic equipment for a range of applications like geophysical survey, navigation and positioning, oceanographic systems and video inspection. The company manufactures subsea connectors and cable moulds and has offices in Aberdeen, Abu Dhabi, Houston, Macaé, New Iberia, Perth and Singapore.

"Joining STP provides us with useful guidelines on enhancing or improving security for our day-to-day operations," said Mr Derek Donaldson, Vice President of Asia Pacific, Seatronics.

To find out more about the Secure Trade Partnership, visit www.customs.gov.sg

Recognising Great Communicators

For their contributions to strengthening cooperation through communication, nine Singapore Customs officers have received the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Certificate of Merit. They received the certificates from Singapore Customs Director-General Ho Chee Pong on 7 February 2014, when the agency celebrated International Customs Day.

The World Customs Organisation has designated 2014 as the Year of Communication, with the slogan of “Communication: Sharing Information for Better Cooperation”.

Customs administrations are at the centre of a network of relations, said WCO Secretary-General Kunio Mikuriya in his International Customs Day message. This year’s theme signals the aspiration to do more and raise awareness of the vital role Customs plays in international trade, economic prosperity and social development.

COMMUNICATION FOR COOPERATION

Nine communicators from Singapore Customs were recognised for their efforts in fostering dialogue, building trust and driving success in their respective fields.

Garry Pang is an expert in the areas of Rules of Origin (ROO). Currently Deputy Head Tariffs & Trade Services, he has supported the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Singapore, in negotiating complex ROO chapters in free trade agreements like the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement and the European Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. Garry regularly shares his technical knowledge with companies and chambers of commerce, helping them reap benefits from free trade agreements.

Peh Kay Koon is the Deputy Head of Intelligence (Liaison and Intel Support) in the Intelligence Branch. He works closely with local and foreign agencies on a variety of projects to prevent illicit trade. Kay Koon is also involved in many projects initiated by the WCO.

Edmund Yeoh currently oversees the Pre-Clearance Section of the Risk Assessment Branch as a Deputy Head. He partners authorities such as the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority, Health Sciences Authority and National Environment Agency, to develop a whole-of-government approach to targeting ‘suspicious’ shipments for inspection. Edmund and his team have seen recent successes such as the seizure of \$5 million worth of endangered red sandalwood.

Mohamed Naveen s/o Mohamed Esoof is Deputy Head Risk Assessment and oversees the Analysis and Assessment Section. Naveen works closely with internal stakeholders to provide risk assessment on policy reviews and trade facilitation projects, and advises on measures to address the risks identified.

Jeanine Ho is Deputy Head Company Compliance. Jeanine takes pains to ensure her officers in the Audit and Assessment Section are well-equipped with assessment and audit knowledge, by holding training sessions and sharing her own experience in audit, investigation and intelligence work. She also engages other agencies like the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) to explore collaboration on GST-related compliance matters.

Yu Chye Fong, Deputy Head Permits Compliance, oversees the Compliance & Revenue Recovery Section of the branch. She plans outreach sessions to share Advance Export Declaration (AED) compliance tips with companies, encouraging them to monitor and improve their compliance capabilities. Chye Fong also regularly engages companies on permit and checkpoint offences. When speaking with them, Chye Fong is tactful and empathetic, but remains firm and fair.

Maya Suryani Binte Kassim is a Senior Organisational Excellence & Planning Officer and has an ability to connect with people of all ages. She spearheaded a series of internal communications sessions to rally staff on the business excellence journey. Maya also hosts visitors from local and international agencies that came to learn about Singapore Customs’ best practices.

Alex Tan is a member of the Special Investigation Branch. With a wealth of enforcement experience under his belt, Alex worked closely with Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers to share information on the ground. Together, ICA and Singapore Customs conducted joint operations to smash the syndicates of mid-level contraband cigarette distributors.

Kang Swee Wan is the leader of the Community Engagement Team in the Suppression & Community Engagement Branch. He is the key spokesperson at community outreach events. Swee Wan conveys anti-contraband cigarettes messages engagingly, explaining complex issues simply with a sense of humour. He also works closely with grassroots members, agencies, schools and companies to coordinate such events.



Customs officers were honoured for strengthening cooperation through communication. The officers are (from left): Kang Swee Wan, Peh Kay Koon, Yu Chye Fong, Alex Tan, Garry Pang, Edmund Yeoh, Mohamed Naveen s/o Mohamed Esoof and Maya Suryani Binte Kassim. Jeanine Ho (not in picture) also received the WCO Certificate of Merit.

Boosting Customs Capacities in ASEAN

In partnership with Japan Customs, Singapore Customs Academy ran a series of workshops on modern customs procedures for our ASEAN counterparts in October and December 2013.



Singapore Customs and Japan Customs hosted customs officials from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in a recent workshop on Authorised Economic Operator programmes.

These workshops were organised under the ambit of the Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century and co-sponsored by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

LEARNING ABOUT SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY PROGRAMMES

During the three-day course from 23 to 25 October, 13 customs officials from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand learnt about the objectives and benefits of implementing Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programmes.

Experts from Japan Customs and Singapore Customs shared about the countries' experiences in rolling out their national AEO programmes. The visitors also witnessed the security measures a local AEO-certified company had put in place, during a site visit on 25 October 2013.

In addition, the participants learnt how to elevate their national AEO programmes to the international level with Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs). Singapore Customs and Japan Customs shared their experiences negotiating and implementing these arrangements.

LEVERAGING ON TECHNOLOGY FOR CUSTOMS PROCESSES

Another five-day course was held from 9 to 13 December for 28 customs officials from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. This course focused on best practices for classification and the use of information and communication technology for modern customs procedures.

Japan Customs outlined some good practices for building up classification infrastructure. Participants also took turns sharing about their countries' implementation of the Harmonised System (HS), an international nomenclature for the classification of goods.

Singapore Customs shared our experience in the computerisation of customs processes through electronic systems such as TradeNet and eCustoms. The information declared through these systems is also used downstream for statistical, regulatory and compliance processes.

The course also included two field visits to help the participants appreciate how technology is harnessed for facilitating trade. First, the participants visited technology vendor CrimsonLogic to learn how it administers TradeNet, Singapore's National Single Window for trade declarations. The next day, they visited a warehouse to understand how the warehouse management system was integrated with TradeNet so that customs transactions can be completed efficiently.



A second workshop was held in December for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam customs officials, which focused on classification and using infocomm technology to facilitate trade.

TRAINING CALENDAR

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to www.customsacademy.gov.sg

PROGRAMME

DATES

SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT

This three-day course provides trade declarants with an overview of customs procedures pertaining to the import and export of goods, the basic requirements for preparing TradeNet declarations, classification of goods, and the rules of origin.

The course comprises three modules:

- SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days)
- SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (Half-day)
- SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (Half-day)

Participants may register for individual modules.

7-9 Apr 2014

SC200 STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME

This one-day seminar provides an overview of Singapore's strategic goods control system and its regulations, registration procedures and permit requirements for strategic goods transactions, as well as the essentials of an internal (export control) compliance programme.

The seminar comprises two modules:

- SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control (Half-day)
- SC202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme (Half-day)

Participants may register for individual modules.

14 Apr 2014

SC400 CUSTOMS COMPETENCY TEST FOR DECLARANTS

This module is designed to test an individual's knowledge of the customs procedures and documentation requirements. Upon passing this test, the individual can then apply for registration with SC as a declarant to submit TradeNet permit declarations.

The test will be an open-book exam comprising of 50 multiple choice questions. The topics tested include: customs procedures, TradeNet declarations, valuation, classification, rules of origin and specialised procedures. The one-hour test can be taken during the AM or PM session.

Individuals who wish to sit for the test are advised to familiarise themselves with above-listed subject areas. They can do so through courses or eLearning at Singapore Customs Academy, the Virtual Academy and by visiting the Singapore Customs website.

28 Mar 2014
(AM and PM Sessions)

OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED TRADERS

This quarterly programme is designed to equip new traders with a better understanding of customs documentation procedures, as well as the various customs schemes and services available. For enquiries, please email customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg

27 Mar 2014

OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS

This bimonthly programme is designed to equip newly-registered manufacturers with a better understanding of the rules of origin under Singapore's free trade agreements, the application procedures for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements. For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg

15 May 2014

TRADERS CLINIC

These one-to-one consultation sessions are an avenue for traders to seek general advice on general customs procedures and services. If you are interested, write in to customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg to set up a date. Sessions are subject to availability.



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

We Make Trade Easy, Fair & Secure

55 Newton Road #10-01 Revenue House Singapore 307987
www.customs.gov.sg