



CUSTOMS NEWS



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THE COMMISSIONER SPEAKS

Doubly hit by the social movement and COVID-19, Hong Kong has been going through some trying and turbulent times and kept trudging for more than a year. As a result of the Central Government's decisive action and concerted effort of the public, we have finally turned the tide and regained our foothold now.

After the National Security Law came into effect, law enforcement agencies have joined hands to protect our country by targeting acts that endanger national security, and unwaveringly assist the Chief Executive, the Committee for Safeguarding National Security (Committee on National Security) and the Office for Safeguarding National Security in maintaining national security and combating terrorist activities. The Customs and Excise Department, serving in the framework of the Committee

on National Security, will assist in planning and formulating initiatives and policies on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong.

As the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, not only do I feel greatly honoured to be appointed as a member of the Committee on National Security, I am also humbled by the sacred and important task ahead. I will spare no effort to live up to the expectations of the country, and continue to lead the Department in striving to reinforce our functions in two major areas, namely law enforcement and intelligence. We will build a "steel wall" at the southern gateway of the country to safeguard the stability of Hong Kong and national security with full commitment through various aspects of our work, from operations, strategies, risk assessment to intelligence analysis and application of technology.



"Gate-keeping" has always been the most important mission of the Department. As the first line of defence at boundary control points, we face massive inflow of passengers, baggages, cargoes and postal parcels every day. The Department must do its utmost and be on full alert to intercept the inflow of arms, ammunition, weapon parts and everything that may endanger national security. Being "precise", "sharp" and "prompt" is crucial to achieving the task. Our colleagues have remained composed in carrying out duties in accordance with the relevant ordinances by conducting risk assessment and intelligence analysis, and offered unwavering support in "stopping violence and curbing disorder" to safeguard national security. For this, we should be proud of ourselves.

Drastic times call for drastic measures. Ever since the implementation of the National Security Law, the effect has been instant and remarkable. The National Security Law is proved to be a "mighty sword" that can vanquish the illegal acts, violence and chaos in the past year. It is also a "pillar of the ocean" that helps restore order, prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, thus ensuring





the continued success of “one country, two systems”. The Department is an important law enforcement agency of the SAR Government, and I expect all our colleagues to show commitment to the safeguarding of national security and set a good example by abiding by the law and upholding the rule of law in order to preserve the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 across the globe, Hong Kong is also facing a surge of confirmed cases. As early as the start of the year when infection cases

emerged, the Department foresaw an overwhelming demand for anti-epidemic items in the community and expeditiously responded by launching an operation codenamed “Guardian”. Apart from conducting territory-wide inspections and enforcement actions at retail outlets, we also carried out compliance promotion campaigns for manufacturers and suppliers. This two-pronged approach covered both the source of supply and sale of anti-epidemic items on the market, with a view to ensuring compliance with the Trade Descriptions Ordinance and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance.

Moreover, the Department has been going all out in the fight against the epidemic. From organising different teams for working at quarantine centres, conducting home visits, and carrying out quarantine orders, tracing and volunteering work to actively participating in the testing service for designated groups introduced by the Government, the Department is doing utmost in various aspects to tie in with the Government's anti-epidemic strategy.

On September 14 this year, I was invited to visit the Fire Eye Laboratory, the temporary air-inflated film chambers at Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park to give encouragement to both their Mainland and Hong Kong staff members. During the visit, I met Professor Anthony Wu, Chairman of Sunrise Diagnostic Centre by chance and was briefed of the Laboratory's operation. I also learned from the responsible staff members of Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre on the application of the latest technology in specimen delivery. The decisive action by the National Health Commission to send the Mainland nucleic acid test support team to Hong Kong fully demonstrated the Central Government's





support for the Universal Community Testing Programme of Hong Kong, and greatly enhanced our testing capacity in a short period of time. The fact that the Mainland and Hong Kong staff members worked in close collaboration to carry out testing in a professional and selfless manner reflected the Chinese nation's determination to combat the epidemic in unity. And I would like to express my wholehearted gratitude to all of them for their arduous efforts.

Under the shadow of the social movement and epidemic, the Department has endeavoured to overcome the obstacles in fulfilling the duties of law enforcement, customs clearance and trade facilitation. As the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is going ahead at full steam, it is opportune for Hong Kong to seize the opportunity to integrate into the overall development of the country amidst the complex and changing environment. Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point is the seventh land crossing between Shenzhen and Hong Kong. With the opening of its cargo clearance facilities in August this

year, the target of "East in East out, West in West out" for cross-boundary freight traffic has been achieved. It also marked the full commissioning of the three major cross-boundary infrastructure projects between Guangdong and Hong Kong. As such, we must do our best in the work of information exchange, mutual recognition of regulations and mutual assistance in law enforcement, with a view to enhancing our connectivity and cooperation with the Shenzhen Customs and our counterparts in the Mainland, thereby creating favourable conditions for the development of the Greater Bay Area.

The Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, which celebrates the 40th anniversary of its establishment this year, has entered a ground-breaking era of ubiquitous 5G coverage. Based on the four-key-pillar concept under the smart customs blueprint, the Department actively reinforces and strengthens its functions as a "law enforcer and service provider" as well as a "trade facilitator". At the same time, it also develops the diversified roles of an "economic development promoter" by implementing intelligent optimisation

and innovation enhancements in the four core areas, namely "Smart Boundary Management", "Smart Investigation and Case Management", "Smart Trade Facilitation" and "Smart Business Development", so as to work towards the ambitious goal of "Smart Customs".

Conclusion

In the midst of the challenges facing Hong Kong, our Department could not possibly stay out of the situation, but have to show our fighting spirit of being stronger and more courageous despite all the adversity and setbacks. We must demand more of ourselves, be more determined to accomplish our missions and more committed to shoulder our responsibilities. Since crises and difficulties would never go away by themselves, we must overcome them with great perseverance and determination. Serving on the Committee on National Security in my capacity as the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, I always remind myself of the famous quote: "I will give my life for the sake of my country, regardless of fortune or misfortune to myself". I trust that all our colleagues will stay true to the Department's missions, and adhere to our values and principles while steadfastly attending to duties. Together, we shall rise to the occasion and do our part to safeguard national security as well as the long-term stability and safety of Hong Kong.

Hermes Tang
Commissioner

COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF LT/HYW BOUNDARY CONTROL POINT



The Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee, Mr Li Xi (seventh left); the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam (seventh right); the Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Ma Xingrui (sixth left); Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council Mr Zhang Xiaoming (sixth right); the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Luo Huining (fifth left); the Secretary of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee, Mr Wang Weizhong (fifth right); and other officiating guests at the opening ceremony.

Jointly hosted by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, and the Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee, Mr Li Xi, the opening ceremony of the Liantang Port (LP) / Heung Yuen Wai (HYW) Boundary Control Point (BCP) was held in the morning of August 26 this year at the Liantang Port of Shenzhen. The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang, joined the ceremony.

The BCP officially commenced at 4 pm on that day. During the initial stage, cargo clearance facilities opens from

7 am to 10 pm, same as that at Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok Control Points nearby. Passenger clearance facilities, public car park, public transport interchange and commercial shops will start at a later stage.

The HYW BCP is the fifth land boundary control point for vehicles between Shenzhen and Hong Kong (Other four BCPs are Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok, Lok Ma Chau and Shenzhen Bay). It is also the first control point designed and constructed under the concept of "direct access to people and vehicles".

Members of the public can in the future reach the control point directly by means of public transport services, private cars or a pedestrian subway connecting to the HYW BCP.

The passenger terminal building is a four-storey building, consisting of a public transport interchange, a public car park, as well as the departure floor and arrival floor of the Hong Kong side. The new BCP is the first one with vehicle clearance facilities set up on different floors. Nine goods vehicle kiosks, one cargo examination building and one vehicle X-ray inspection building are constructed on the ground floor for each of the outbound and inbound clearance routes, while four private car kiosks and two coach kiosks are built at each outbound and inbound sides on the podium floor for incoming and outgoing vehicles with passengers.

As for the collaboration with Mainland Customs, existing arrangements for port liaison, intelligence exchanges and Customs Green Seal application



The cargo clearance facilities of Heung Yuen Wai Control Point commenced operation at 4 pm on August 26 this year.



The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang (first left), introduces an exhibition on the new port to other officials of the HKSARG before the opening ceremony on August 26 this year.

all remain. The Single E-lock Scheme has now covered the new control point, allowing goods vehicles under the Scheme to reach conveniently the six clearance points in eastern Guangdong. Mutual-recognition for private car examination results will also be introduced when passenger clearance facilities open later.

To ensure smooth operation on the commissioning day, Hong Kong Customs set up a Commissioning Assurance Task Force together with respective local and Mainland counterparts, with a view to ensuring that swift action could be taken to cope with all possible situations on the commissioning day. A Joint Operation Centre (JOC) was also set up by the Hong Kong Customs, Immigration Department and the Hong Kong Police Force to closely monitor the operation of the BCP and the vehicular flow.

Furthermore, the Land Boundary Command set up a Commissioning Operation Working Group (COWG) with the Office of Information Technology to safeguard the readiness of Customs clearance systems.

The COWG closely monitored the performance of Customs clearance systems on the commissioning day, ensuring that smooth goods vehicles clearance services were provided.

After the opening ceremony, Mr Tang visited the JOC and respective Customs clearance facilities of the new control point, and took a look of frontline officers' working condition.

The commissioning of the new BCP realises well the "East in, East out; West in, West out" concept for the

HK-Shenzhen cross-boundary goods vehicle traffic, helping a re-distribution of cross-boundary traffic among the land-based control points in the east. Overall cross-boundary traffic capacity and efficiency will be substantially enhanced.

To facilitate the cross-boundary goods vehicles drivers to familiarise with the cargo clearance flow at HYWCP, Hong Kong Customs produced leaflets and videos to introduce relevant clearance routes and have them uploaded on the website and YouTube channel of Hong Kong Customs. Relevant information has also been distributed through the newly-launched WeChat Official Account for cross-boundary drivers and by means of email and SMS.

Hong Kong Customs will, as always, provide quality and efficient clearance services at the HYW BCP for the cargo industry and uphold its "gate-keeper" and "trade facilitation" roles, with an aim of facilitating the cross-boundary logistics movement and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Land Boundary Command



The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang (second right), visits the facilities of Heung Yuen Wai Control Point, including Joint Operation Centre after the opening ceremony on August 26 this year.

HONG KONG CUSTOMS SPARES NO EFFORT IN ANTI-EPIDEMIC MISSION

Hong Kong Customs has all along remain vigilant in discharging our anti-epidemic duties since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the end of last year. Apart from maintaining customs clearance services at those control points that remain open, Customs officers have paid special anti-epidemic efforts in different areas and that include mounting a large scale enforcement operation targeting anti-epidemic products in both retail and wholesale markets, procurement of protective items for the Department's officers, as well as joining of various anti-epidemic teams to help with the Government's anti-COVID 19 measures. All these actions showcase Customs' work in safeguarding Hong Kong citizens at all anti-epidemic fronts.



Customs launched a territory-wide special operation codenamed "Guardian" since January 27 this year to conduct spot-checks and enforcement operations against common protective items. The operation has been running for nearly 9 months to date. More than 6 000 officers have hitherto been mobilised to conduct over 38 000 inspections at retail spots, manufacturers and online traders.

Guardian - Territory-wide spot-check enforcement operation on common protective items

Customs launched a territory-wide special operation codenamed "Guardian" since January 27 this year to conduct spot-checks and enforcement operations against common protective items. The operation has been running for over 9 months to date. More than 6 000 officers have hitherto been mobilised to conduct over 38 000 inspections at retail spots, manufacturers and online traders.

During the operation, multiple samples of surgical masks and hand sanitisers have been test-purchased for safety tests and content examination conducted on disinfectant alcohol. Seventeen cases of suspected violations of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO) and 13 cases of suspected violations of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO) were found. Eighty persons have been arrested so far and goods suspected of violating the law including over 24 million surgical masks, 314 bottles of disinfectant alcohol and 23 bottles of normal saline seized.

Apart from enforcement action, Customs values compliance promotion equally high. An outreach programme aiming at compliance promotion among local mask manufacturers and online surgical mask retailers who offer bulk presales has been putting in force since April this year. Such a dual-pronged approach does put all layers from production to retailing under surveillance and inspection, making sure that surgical masks sold in the market do comply with the TDO and the CGSO.

Good progress has been made since its launch. To date, Customs has met

with over 50 manufacturers and online retailers through the programme and examined their products' specifications. Special reminders have been given to them on strict compliance with relevant laws. In particular, they are cautioned that surgical masks produced and sold should undergo tests to ensure the masks do comply with the general safety requirements and, all labels or trade descriptions must be correct. No company has been found violating the relevant ordinances during spot checks of the outreach programme.

Prompt procurement of anti-epidemic supplies for combating COVID-19 and protecting frontline officers

Aiming to enhance the overall anti-epidemic capability and better protect frontline officers, Customs has since January this year proactively procured a series of anti-epidemic supplies, nipping the possible outbreak in the bud. Specifically, the Department conducted prompt assessment and analysis of the needs of frontline; applied for funding required; located



Automatic Sanitisation Sprayers at personal search rooms eliminate the airborne viruses and bacteria.



Installed at Customs cubicles and briefing rooms, the Portable Medical Grade Air Purifiers effectively kill a wide variety of viruses and bacteria and effectively prevent their spread.

every suitable vendor of various supplies; and timely procured and delivered the supplies to frontline formations so as to strengthen the effectiveness in combating the epidemic.

Positive feedback was received from frontline officers on the anti-epidemic supplies provided, especially the following items:

- Portable Medical Grade Air Purifiers, being placed at Customs facilities and offices, effectively kill a wide variety of viruses and bacteria (including novel coronaviruses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) coronavirus, avian influenza H1N1, influenza H3N2, Escherichia Coli, measles virus, etc.) so as to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria in the workplace.
- Automatic Sanitisation Sprayers, through regular automatic spraying of disinfectant to eliminate airborne

viruses and bacteria, effectively prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria.

- InfraRed Sensor Automatic Dispensers with Alcohol-based Handrub disinfect hands with contactless automatic sensor to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria effectively.
- Sanitisation Clean Mats, through eliminating viruses and bacteria adhered on the outsole of shoes, effectively prevent cross-contamination and spread of viruses and bacteria.
- Trash Bins with Lids, which replaced the uncovered trash bins previously in use, are much safer for officers to dispose discarded masks and tissues, thus minimising the risk of spreading viruses and bacteria.

The Department has indeed encountered great challenges during the procurement of anti-epidemic

supplies. Notwithstanding such difficulties, the Department eventually overcome the problems through concerted effort.

In such circumstance, procurement of anti-epidemic supplies turned into a race against the clock. To achieve timely procurement, frontline formations quickly assessed the situation and provided the required type and quantity of anti-epidemic supplies; the Office of Project Planning and Development promptly analysed and co-ordinated the users' requirements, applied for the funding required, conducted market researches, and identified potential suppliers, etc; the Supplies Section accorded priority to handling the procurement and minimised the time required; and the Accounts Section processed the invoices quickly to make good of the funding approved within the financial year. With our concerted efforts and close collaboration, the Department completed the procurement smoothly and swiftly. More importantly, the required anti-epidemic supplies were distributed timely to frontline different formations between February and March this year. This greatly helped fight the virus and better protected the health and safety of frontline officers.

To guard against future epidemic, the Department has been exploring the procurement of new and advanced anti-epidemic equipment to further enhance our capability in fighting this battle.

Hong Kong Customs' Anti-epidemic Team

To tie in with the Government's multifaceted anti-epidemic measures in the fight against the pandemic, over 100 Customs officers have voluntarily

participated in the Department's Anti-epidemic Team since February this year to offer, staunch support to a variety of anti-epidemic duties undertaken by different departments. In addition, around 110 serving and retired Customs officers also actively took part in off-duty volunteer activities organised by the C&ED Volunteer Team and make their contribution to safeguarding the public interests of Hong Kong.

Working scope of the Hong Kong Customs' Anti-epidemic Team is wide and extensive.

Quarantine Camp Team

Following the Government's requirement made in February and March this year under which inbound travelers from the Mainland, Macao, Taiwan and overseas countries must undergo 14-day quarantine, Hong Kong Customs' Anti-epidemic



Customs' Anti-epidemic Team has assisted since February 8 the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in managing and running of two quarantine centres at Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre and Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre. Camp team members deliver round-the-clock support services at both centres, such as handling check-in and check-out formalities and arranging and delivering daily necessities for those inside in the camps.



Customs' Anti-epidemic Team has assisted since February 14 this year the Department of Health in conducting spot checks on home quarantined people.



Customs' Anti-epidemic Team sent members to the Hong Kong International Airport and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point in March and April to assist the Department of Health in issuing compulsory quarantine order and briefing the incoming travelers of the order.

Team has assisted since February 8 the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in managing and running of two quarantine centres at Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre and Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre. Camp team members deliver round-the-clock support services at both centres, such as handling check-in and check-out formalities and arranging and delivering daily necessities for those inside the camps.

Home Visit Team

Most returning Hong Kong residents opt for home quarantine. To avert those under home quarantine from breaching the quarantine order, Customs' Anti-epidemic Team has assisted since February 14 this year the Department of Health (DH) in conducting spot checks on home quarantined people. Since then visit team officers have conducted about 4 000 spot checks in Kowloon East region.

Quarantine Order Team

As a result of severe epidemic development in overseas countries, returnees soared in March. Customs'

Anti-epidemic Team sent members to the Hong Kong International Airport and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point in March and April to assist the DH in issuing compulsory quarantine order and briefing the incoming travelers of the order.

Tracing Team

To suppress further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the community, Customs' Anti-epidemic Team assisted the Centre for Health Protection between late March and early April this year. Work in the aspect included contact tracing of confirmed cases, such as the places that the patients had visited and close contacts made.

C&ED Volunteer Team

On top of the teams above, C&ED Volunteer Team with both serving and retired officers as members has also been providing logistics support for hospitals and temporary test centres at the AsiaWorld-Expo and the Regal Oriental Hotel. Volunteers also visited and distributed anti-epidemic goods to elderly and grassroots families; and helped with the testing of home-quarantine electronic wristbands.

Since February, over 1 500 visits have been made in more than 6 000 service hours.

All in all, Customs officers have fully demonstrated strong bond spirit and full dedication in fighting this unprecedented epidemic. And united effort is always the key to our success in this battle.



Customs' Anti-epidemic Team assisted the Centre for Health Protection between late March and early April this year. Work in the aspect included contact tracing of confirmed cases, such as the places that the patients had visited and close contacts made.

HONG KONG CUSTOMS MAKES HKAEO DEVELOPMENT AGAINST EPIDEMIC



Smart Customs Blueprint



自由貿易協定
中轉貨物便利計劃
Free Trade Agreement
Transshipment Facilitation Scheme



AEO Priority extended to FTA Scheme

Reinforce co-operation with other customs administrations amid pandemic

Hong Kong Customs continues to stand fast and step up trade facilitation measures amid the COVID-19 epidemic. Demonstrating its agility and resilience, Office of Supply Chain Security Management (OSCS) does not make a stop to promote the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator (HKAEO) Programme via electronic platform. No time has also been lost in extending the Programme's benefits and assisting local enterprises in enhancing supply chain security and competitiveness to explore new markets. These are especially important to mitigate the virus impact and that also strengthens Hong Kong Customs' role as an economic development promoter.

In order to make sure there is an effective implementation of the AEO Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) during the epidemic outbreak and to get prepared for MRA negotiation, OSCS has all along kept its close co-operation with other customs administrations. Online conference was conducted with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China to review the latest development of the AEO Programme in both sides and to map out strategies for the smooth operation of the AEO MRA. Besides, OSCS officers also held discussion with the Consul of Customs of the Republic of Indonesia in Hong Kong in exploring feasible means for speeding up the development of an AEO MRA between the two sides.

Facilitate smart business development to brace up in adversity

To support the "Smart Customs Blueprint" and "HKAEO Programme 2.0" development, OSCS also started collaboration in August this year with the Ports and Maritime Command to further enhance the benefits to HKAEOs by prioritising their applications under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Transshipment Facilitation Scheme. This allows enterprises to enjoy the customs tariff reduction within the FTA network for facilitating business development and exploring business opportunities all around the region.

Besides, in order to ensure a smooth declaration process for traders to enhance the bilateral trade volume, OSCS has specially produced a series of training videos to demonstrate the procedures of inputting relevant information to the declaration systems of the Mainland of China, Singapore and Malaysia for enjoying clearance benefits under the AEO MRAs. The videos have all been uploaded onto the Department YouTube channel and were sent to respective customs administrations for distributing to their local traders and customs brokers.



Webinar workshop with Hong Kong Trade Development Council



Virtual meeting with AEO applicant



Interview by "Economic Digest"



New "AEO Blogger" episode



Providing guidance for security enhancement



Company visit for accreditation

Innovative promotion approach against the epidemic

Meanwhile, our promotion work has never been halted during the pandemic period. OSCS collaborated with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to organise two livestreaming webinar workshops. The webinars aimed at introducing the latest development and benefits of HKAE0 Programme to some 800 local traders on how HKAE0 Programme could assist enterprises to explore and seize business opportunities brought by the Greater Bay Area (GBA) development.

Two episodes of "AEO Blogger" were also released during the pandemic period in which senior management of two HKAE0s shared how HKAE0 Programme helps enterprises to upgrade, enhance and improve the internal management as well as supply chain security under which companies can better explore the GBA market. In addition, finance publication "Economic Digest" published a feature story article in May this year to introduce the benefits of HKAE0 Programme and how it enhances the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises.

Smart accreditation to minimise social contact

OSCS officers made good use of information technology to keep up accreditation speed during the time when social contact must be minimised. Virtual meetings with applicants were arranged and a number of companies were successfully accredited as HKAE0. As a matter of fact, commodities of as many as eight percent of the overall value of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in the first quarter of this year enjoyed HKAE0 clearance facilitation.

With a strong objective to help local enterprises exploring new business opportunities and enhancing competitive edge under the epidemic impact, OSCS pledges to continue with its innovation and further strengthen Hong Kong Customs' role in facilitating legitimate trade.

**Office of Supply Chain
Security Management**



HONG KONG CUSTOMS COLLEGE COLLABORATES WITH UNIVERSITIES TO ENRICH INDUCTION PROGRAMMES AND OFFER ARTICULATION PATHWAYS FOR DEGREE PROGRAMMES



The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang (right), signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the President of the Open University of Hong Kong, Professor Wong Yuk-shan (left), on June 11 this year.

Hong Kong Customs has all along attached great importance to staff training with a view to enhancing enforcement effectiveness. To enrich induction training and encourage in-service education, the Department has entered into two memoranda of understanding (MoU) with two local universities in June this year. This is a significant step to map out the Department's staff development strategy.

For maintaining a high standard of the Customs induction programmes, Hong Kong Customs College (HKCC) conducted a course review last year and gained management's support to incorporate new elements delivered by universities into the induction programmes commenced this year.

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang, signed

an MoU with the President of the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), Professor Wong Yuk-shan, on June 11 this year. All new trainee Inspectors and Customs Officers enrolled since May this year would take two new modules offered by the OUHK, namely "Social Studies in Law Enforcement" and "Psychological Studies in Law Enforcement", as one of the components of the induction programmes. The contents of the two modules combine both theories and practices. Apart from various concepts of criminology, sociology and psychology, the modules also cover practical knowledge in conflict management, psychological skills, media relations, etc, so as to fully enhance Customs officers' practical foundation training.

Upon completion of relevant programmes, graduate Inspectors and

Customs Officers will be awarded the "Certificate in Law Enforcement and Customs Management" by the OUHK. They will be entitled to an exemption of 30 credits when pursuing the "Bachelor of Social Sciences in Law Enforcement and Security Management" (or with Honours). Together with the credit exemption offered by the OUHK since 2004, qualified Customs Officers will be granted at most an exemption of 50 credits, therefore, saving about one-third of curriculum time and course fee. Officers holding local accredited Higher Diplomas or Associate Degrees may even gain further credit exemptions.

Apart from the co-operation with the OUHK, Hong Kong Customs also established co-operation ties with City University of Hong Kong (CityU). The Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho, and the Vice-President (Development and External Relations) of CityU, Professor Matthew Lee, witnessed the signing of the MoU by the Assistant Commissioner (Administration and Human Resource Development), Mr Ellis Lai, and the Director of the School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) of CityU, Dr Louis Ma, on June 19 this year. Under the co-operation, the SCOPE of CityU will integrate the element of public service management into the induction programmes of which the graduates can gain an exemption of 36 credits when enrolling in the "Advanced Diploma in Management

Studies” offered by the SCOPE of CityU. The Advanced Diploma course is also articulated with the “Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Public Administration and Management” jointly organised by the SCOPE of CityU and De Montfort University of the United Kingdom to

facilitate Customs officers to study the degree course.

Mr Tang expressed his gratitude to the two universities for joining hands with Hong Kong Customs in enhancing the Department’s staff training and

encouraging continuous education. He said that the MoUs would not only raise the professional standard and academic status of Customs induction programmes, but also facilitate in-service education and encourage lifelong learning, which are extremely meaningful to the career prospects of Customs officers.

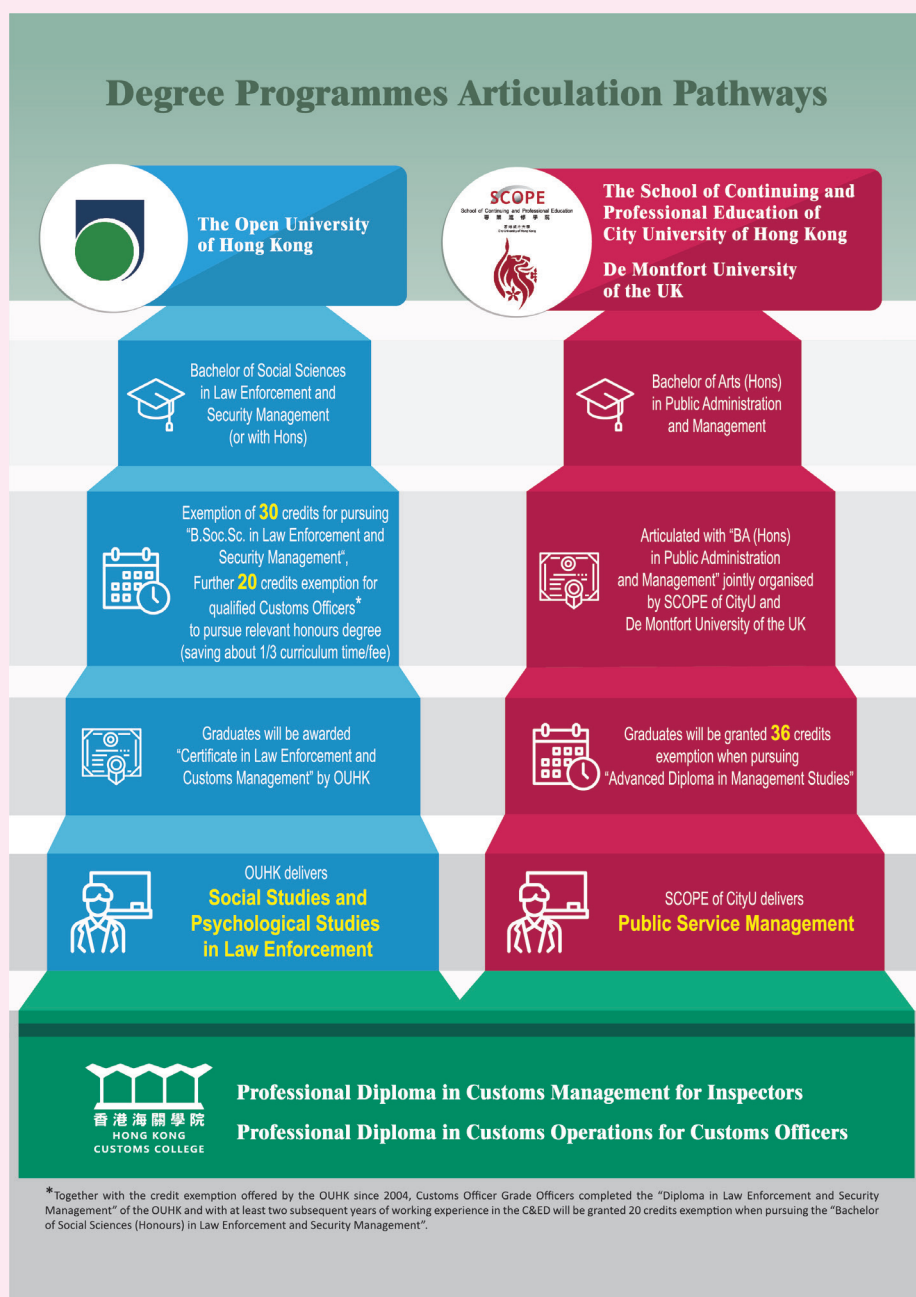
Mr Tang added that following the HKCC obtaining the accreditation approval from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications in December 2018 to include the Customs induction programmes for Inspectors and Customs Officers in the Qualifications Register, the new MoUs reached between the Department and the universities marked another milestone in the departmental staff training development.

He said that Customs’ work is becoming more extensive and diversified in recent years. The Department will continue to enhance staff training and promote in-service education in order to secure sustainable development of human resources.

Office of Training and Development



QR code for articulation pathway information





TREMENDOUS BREAKTHROUGH OF CUSTOMS CANINE PROFESSION



A new-born puppy at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Breeding Centre of the Customs Canine Force.

The year 2020 is certainly a remarkable year for the development of Hong Kong Customs' canine profession. Apart from an official upgrade from a Division to become a Group for the Customs Canine Force (CCF), it is particularly delightful to see the birth of the first batch of self-bred puppies and a pioneer co-operation with a local university on dog training course.

The Next Level

As a result of an organisational reshuffle, the Customs Canine Force has been upgraded since June this year to become a Group of more than 100 officers under the command of a Superintendent. Subsequent to the commissioning of Heung Yuen Wai Control Point, the Force now has nine kennels altogether. At present,

the serving canines are specialised in drug, explosive and cash detection, but CCF is striving for more to develop competencies in firearm and tobacco detection in a forward-looking bid to strengthen the Department's enforcement action against terrorism and illicit cigarette activities.

First Self-Bred

Domestic breeding had long been the CCF's development direction in securing a proper canine supply for operational needs. Overseas training and canine purchase have to be suspended as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. It is however exactly under the suspension that the CCF has become more determined to open up a new pathway in breeding matters.

A new dedicated breeding centre under the CCF was set up and started its operation at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao-Bridge Dog Base in February this year. After months of dedication and deep-hearted care, the first batch of six Labradors bred entirely on the Department's own were born on July



The six puppies Lettie, Echo, Gasper, Elmo, Nicky and Dante are named under the acronym of LEGEND.



Tactical and Puppies Development Team taking care of the puppies at the Breeding Centre.

25. This is the first time of such a birth in the Department's history since detector dogs first became officers' working partners dating back to 1975. To all in the CCF, it is such a significant and exciting occurrence that words are simply nothing to express one's feeling. Every officer was in such a rapture to welcome the new litter of adorable Labradors. The newborn puppies' tiny yet lively squeaking and woof especially delivers encouragement and jubilation. It is truly touching to witness the boys and girls peeping out through their sleepy eyelids, getting on their legs, and taking their first wobbly steps.

Mother of the newborns, Fifi, is a drug detector dog from the Mainland serving the Department for more than two years. The father Cooper originated from the UK is also a drug detector dog. During the delivery process, officers from the Tactical and Puppies Development Team of the CCF fulfilled the critical role of "midwives", assisted and comforted Fifi at every moment throughout the battle. The "midwives" themselves are the first batch of trainees who finished the Canine Breeding Training Programme organised by the Veterinary Medical Centre and the Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Science of the Hong Kong City University (CityU) in just weeks before the birth. This is a pilot canine breeding course tailor-made for local law enforcement agencies to boost up officers' knowledge of advanced breeding techniques, dog pregnancy, nutrition, as well as puppy care, helping them



The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang (front row, centre), and the President Way Kou, President of CityU (front row, fifth right) together with trainees of the Customs Canine Force at the certificate presentation ceremony of the Canine Breeding Training Programme.

overcome their first big challenge in the breeding programme.

Professional Training

Speaking at the certificate presentation ceremony of the training programme on July 10, Commissioner of Customs and Excise Mr Hermes Tang acknowledged the contribution by the CityU in building up the CCF expertise, beefing up officers' confidence and competency in domestic canine breeding and fostering.

To guarantee the quality of professional dog handlers and promote autonomy in dog training, the CCF is now in full swing to reach the target of receiving an accreditation for its ten-week Drugs Detector Dog Handling Training Programme under the Qualifications Framework of Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications. After months of discussion with officers of other major user Formations, the CCF

has already built up a quality assurance mechanism for a sustainable and professional training programme as a preparation for high-quality canine training.

Care, Coach and Foster

With all these new initiatives underway, the CCF has opened up a new chapter in its history. All officers are committed to keep up the motto: Care, Coach and Foster in the course of dog handling to sustain professionalism. In good health condition, the newborns are now growing up day by day. They will start their life adventure, social exploration and skill learning in our human world. We all look forward to witnessing the teaming up of these loyal and brilliant working partners with our Customs officers on the frontline in the near future.

Land Boundary Command

CUSTOMS-GFS JOIN HANDS FOIL THE FIRST AIRCRAFT ENGINE TRAFFICKING ATTEMPT WITH RECORD SEABORNE COCAINE SEIZURE



Head of Ports and Maritime Command Mr Benson Lee (centre), Group Head (Drug Investigation) of Customs Drug Investigation Bureau Mr Barry Chu (left), and Quality Assurance Manager of Government Flying Service Mr Raymond Ho (right) speak at the joint press conference held on May 26 this year.

In the first case of its type, Hong Kong Customs seized about 217 kilograms of cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$246 million from an aircraft engine in a seaborne container on May 20 this year. This is also a record seizure of cocaine in seaborne trafficking since 2012, owing to the concerted efforts by Hong Kong Customs and the Government Flying Service (GFS).

Through risk assessment and data analysis, officers from the Ports and Maritime Command (PMC) inspected an inbound container from Ecuador carrying a massive and sophisticated aircraft engine at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. Due to the complexity of the engine's structure, GFS was contacted for an on-site discussion and exploring ways to dismantle the engine for Customs inspection.

The engine was later sent to the GFS base located at the Hong Kong

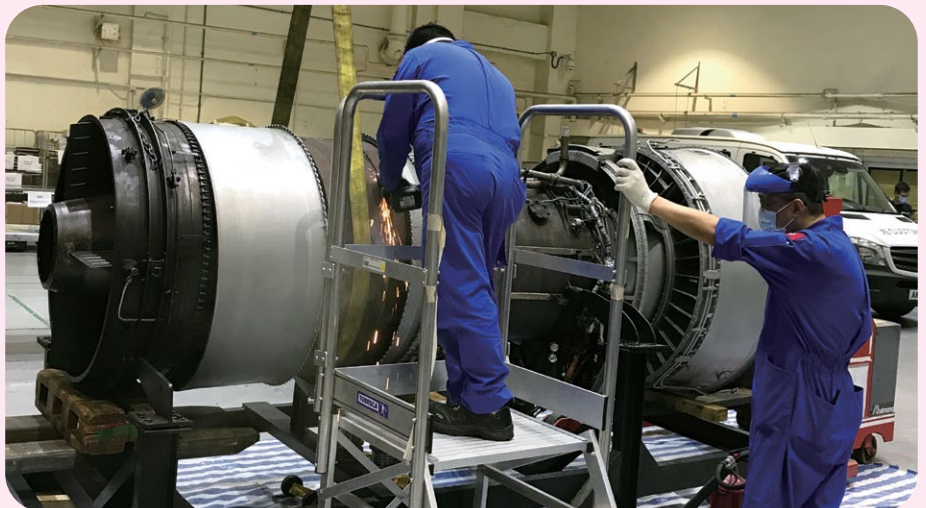
International Airport for in-depth examination by PMC officers and GFS engineers. Subsequent to thorough discussion, a hole was first drilled on the combustion chamber's surface by a dedicated drill for aircraft engine repairing, through which foreign objects and white powder were found. With the entire chamber dismantled later, officers found eight specially-welded semicircular metal components refitted as a cylinder, resembling the

normal appearance of the chamber. The dismantling and inspection lasted for as long as nine hours, eventually ended up with the record seizure of 217 kg of cocaine wrapped by soundproof materials and concealed inside the metal components.

Officers from PMC, the Customs Drug Investigation Bureau and the GFS held a joint press conference in the same month on the case and briefed the press of how the drug syndicate's tricks of exploiting an enormous and sophisticated machinery to conceal drugs were unveiled.

The Head of Ports and Maritime Command, Mr Benson Lee, pledged at the press conference that facing syndicates' multiform and tricky modus operandi, Hong Kong Customs would spare no effort to combat drug trafficking activities by means of risk assessment, intelligence analysis, and collaboration with local and overseas legal enforcement agencies.

Ports and Maritime Command



The Government Flying Service assists to dismantle and inspect the complicated mechanical parts.

VIRTUAL 135TH/136TH SESSIONS OF THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL



Head of Customs Affairs and Co-operation Mr Wong Jug-tung attends the virtual 135th/136th Sessions of the Customs Co-operation Council.

The Head of Customs Affairs and Co-operation of Hong Kong Customs, Mr Wong Jug-tung, attended the virtual

member administrations to agree on the necessary administrative and financial arrangements in order to

135th/136th Sessions of the Customs Co-operation Council on June 25 this year.

These Sessions, held in virtual way for the first time, provided with a platform for

maintain the normal functioning of the World Customs Organization (WCO) amid the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was participated by representatives of 140 member administrations in total.

The 137th Session was tentatively scheduled to be held in December this year in Brussels.

Hong Kong Customs will continue strengthening our ties with the WCO to meet the common challenges ahead.

Office of Customs Affairs and Co-operation

INFORMATION SYSTEMS STRATEGY STUDY OF HONG KONG CUSTOMS IN FULL SWING

Hong Kong Customs strives to integrate innovative applications into the development of Information Technology (IT) systems to enhance operational efficiency and services quality. An Information Systems Strategy Study (ISSS) which aims to formulate an overarching IT strategic plan to meet business needs for the coming decade is in full swing.

To align with the social distancing measure, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) launched five "virtual conference rooms" on August 10 this year for use throughout the Department. Colleagues can make use of this new initiative to convene online meetings and communicate with distanced working partners by simply using computers or mobile devices with internet access. Its features include instant video communication, online presentation, virtual whiteboard



The Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam (first right), and the ISSS Project Team, meet with the consultants through the "virtual conference room".

and multimedia content sharing.

In order to proceed to the final stage of ISSS amid the pandemic, Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise Mr Jimmy Tam and the Project Team of ISSS had fruitful discussions and exchanged ideas with the consultants on the overall information systems strategic blueprint and other deliverables through meetings in the "virtual conference room" in August

this year. This incarnates the concept of "Smart Customs" through the judicious adoption of innovation and technology in daily business activities of the Department.

Officers can reserve the "virtual conference rooms" by reaching OIT at 3108 3557 or 3759 3338 via the Formation Office Managers.

Office of Information Technology

STRENGTHENING DEPARTMENTAL COUNTER TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS



Customs officers discover hazardous materials during cargo examination in exercise "FRIGATE III".

In order to cope with the latest counter-terrorism (CT) situation in Hong Kong, the Intelligence Bureau of Hong Kong Customs has enhanced the departmental CT preparedness through providing more training and exercises and optimising relevant response plans.

In view of several bomb incidents and postal threats targeting control points and government premises early this year, Counter Terrorism Coordination Group (CTCG) has delivered a total of 15 briefing sessions from February to

June, in order to foster staff knowledge on identification and handling of suspicious objects, precautionary and response measures.

Apart from that, CTCG also conducted two large-scale inter-departmental CT exercises at land boundary crossings. The first exercise, codenamed

"CATCHMOUNT", was mounted at Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point in March this year under the co-ordination of the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit and the second exercise "FRIGATE III" was jointly conducted by Customs and the Fire Services Department at Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point in June before its commissioning with a view to strengthening inter-departmental CT co-ordination and responsiveness in handling terrorist activities.

Intelligence Bureau



An officer from Counter Terrorism Coordination Group conducts a briefing to the observers of the exercise "FRIGATE III".



Customs officers undergo decontamination by the Fire Services Department at Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point in exercise "FRIGATE III".



Officers of the Fire Services Department set up the mobile decontamination shelter and equipment at Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point in exercise "FRIGATE III".

HONG KONG CUSTOMS PERFORMS WELL IN GOVERNMENT-WIDE PHISHING DRILL CAMPAIGN



To enhance staff awareness and capabilities in defending against phishing email attacks, Hong Kong Customs participated in the first-ever Government-wide Phishing Drill Campaign (the Campaign) organised by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) from September last year to January this year, and has achieved encouraging results.

Phishing emails threaten information technology security by camouflage into ordinary emails prompting for actions. They lure computer users to provide sensitive information or open attachment with malware. The Campaign targeted at all departmental staff who would receive simulated phishing emails sent by OGCIO, in order to test their alertness against the threat.

Throughout the period, Office of Information Technology had provided a series of outreach trainings to enhance staff knowledge and capacity to defend against phishing attacks. Customs managed to maintain relatively low click/submission rates comparing to other bureau and departments. The Office of Planning and Development, the Complaints Investigation Group and the Internal Audit Division won the "Overall Zero Click" award. The Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise

(Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam, presented "Certificates of Award" to the representatives from the winning formations on September 3 this year. Other Best Performing Formation (Branch Level) are the Office of Departmental Administration, the Office of Trade Single Window Operation, the Rail and Ferry Command, the Intellectual

Property Investigation Bureau and the Trade Declaration and System Bureau.

In addition to the adoption of advanced firewall technologies, continuous staff training is a key to construct a more robust defence against cyberattacks, which is essential to the digital transformation of the Department.

Office of Information Technology



The Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam (second right), presents "Certificates of Award" to formation representatives of "Overall Zero Click" award winner.



"Certificate of Award" signed by the Departmental Information Technology Security Officer was given to formations with outstanding performance in the Government-wide Phishing Drill Campaign.



BRAND NEW BADGE AWARD SYSTEM OF THE IPR BADGE PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Hong Kong Customs has launched a brand new badge award system for the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Badge Programme for Youth Ambassadors (the Programme) early this year, with a view to promoting and encouraging continuous involvement and commitment of the participants.

Introduced in 2016 under the Youth Ambassadors Against Internet Piracy Scheme (YAS), the Programme enabled participants to keep abreast of the evolving trend of IPR infringement activities resulting from technological and social developments, and consolidate their respect for IPR through the well-structured and diversified three-level courses (Foundation Course, Advanced Course and Tutor Course), educating the youth not to engage in

IPR infringing activities in an organised and systematic way.

Under the new epaulettes, colour badge and star award system, Youth Ambassadors have to put the epaulettes on their uniforms resembling the course level attained. Upon participating in extra activities organised by the Hong Kong Customs, Youth Ambassadors will be awarded with respective colour badges and star insignias in recognition of their participation and engagement. The designated activities are diversified, including visit, exchange, short-term internship, adventure/leadership training, and to become promotion ambassador in events hosted by Customs.




The Programme has been using lively education and publicity to increase

the awareness of respect for IPR amongst the young generation. The participants of the Programme can also help promote the importance of IPR protection amongst their peers, family members and relatives. The new badge award system can enhance the sense of belonging and the level of participation of Youth Ambassadors.


As a new publicity initiative, the Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau also produced a promoting video which shows the highlights of the "2019 Foundation Course of IPR Badge Programme for Youth Ambassadors". The video was published across different platforms, including the Department YouTube channel and the website of Intellectual Property Rights Protection Alliance.

The YAS was first introduced by Hong Kong Customs in collaboration with the Intellectual Property Department and the IPR industry in 2006. The YAS has been supported by over 250,000 members coming from 14 local Youth Uniformed Groups, all of which are part of the youth demographic between the ages of 9 and 25.

Colour Badge

Badge	Target	Requirement
 Green Badge	Participants of Foundation Course	Awarded with Green Badge after attending designated number of Colour Badge activities
 Blue Badge	Participants of Advanced Course	Awarded with Green Badge after attending designated number of Colour Badge activities
 Gold Badge	Participants of Tutor Course	Awarded with Gold Badge after attending designated number of Colour Badge activities

Star Award

Badge	Target	Requirement
 Star Award	All participants of IPR Badge Programme	Awarded with Star Award after attending designated number of Star Award activities

Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau

Epaulettes



NEW TENURE OF THE CROSS BOUNDARY TRANSPORT INDUSTRY CUSTOMER LIAISON GROUP



The then Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Boundary and Ports), Mr Chan Tsz-tat (front row, middle), the Head of Land Boundary Command, Ms Sandra Tam (front row, fifth left), and the then Head of Cross-boundary Bridge Command, Mr Lee Kwok-keung (front row, fifth right), with officers of Land Boundary Command, Cross-boundary Bridge Command and members of the new tenure of the Cross Boundary Transport Industry Customer Liaison Group at the Appointment Ceremony.

The 2020-2022 Appointment Ceremony of the Cross Boundary Transport Industry Customer Liaison Group (CBTICLG) was held on January 13 this year. Assistant Commissioner of the Customs and Excise (Boundary and Ports) by that time Mr Chan Tsz-tat presented the Certificates of Appointment to members. The 62nd meeting of the CBTICLG was also held

on the same day and the Head of Land Boundary Command, Ms Sandra Tam, was elected again as the Chairperson for the new tenure.

Since its establishment in 1999, the CBTICLG has been providing an effective communication platform for Hong Kong Customs and the cross boundary transport industry.

In the new tenure of the CBTICLG, there are three additional members, one from the cross boundary coach industry and two from hired car service industry, making the CBTICLG more representative.

Land Boundary Command

HONG KONG CUSTOMS WECHAT OFFICIAL ACCOUNT FOR CROSS-BOUNDARY DRIVERS



香港海關跨境車輛清關資訊發布

To follow the WeChat Official Account for obtaining latest information, cross-boundary vehicle drivers can search “香港海關跨境車輛清關資訊發布” on WeChat mobile application or use the application to scan the QR code of the Official Account above.

Hong Kong Customs launched a WeChat Official Account (香港海關跨境車輛清關資訊發布) on August 22 this year for dissemination of information on Customs vehicle clearance at land boundary control points to the cargo industry and members of the public, with a view to further strengthening communication with them.

Customs has been using various traditional channels including SMS and e-mail to provide the latest Customs clearance information to the users of the Road Cargo System (ROCARS) in the cross-boundary transport industry.

The newly launched WeChat Official Account can provide comprehensive and timely information on Customs clearance at land boundary control points to cross-boundary transport industry, as well as cross-boundary private car and coach drivers. Diversified information includes the latest Customs clearance arrangements, special clearance reminders, as well as points to note for importing and exporting commodities.

The Department has informed ROCARS users of the account's launch and distributed promotional leaflets to cross-boundary drivers at land boundary control points. To follow the

WeChat Official Account for obtaining the latest information, cross-boundary vehicle drivers can search “香港海關跨境車輛清關資訊發布” on WeChat mobile application or use the application to scan the QR code of the Official Account.

Land Boundary Command



Customs launched the WeChat official account for dissemination of information on Customs vehicle clearance at land boundary control points to the cargo industry and members of the public.

SMART BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT - “PRIME” X-RAY IMAGE ANALYSIS SUPPORT SYSTEM

The Land Boundary Command (LBC) of Hong Kong Customs developed an innovative and comprehensive X-ray Image Analysis Support System, namely “PRIME” (Platform for X-Ray Image Evaluation) in late 2019, which is expected to be rolled out officially on Departmental Customs Portal

later this year. The “PRIME” system can further enhance the enforcement effectiveness of frontline officers and boost up the effectiveness of Customs clearance at control points as well as combating smuggling activities and crimes, showcasing the Department's strong determination in implementing

the “Smart Boundary Management” under the “Smart Customs Blueprint”.

X-ray scanning system has been all along the crucial inspection equipment being used by frontline officers in daily passenger and cargo clearance. Until now, over 180 sets of X-ray scanning



By using the powerful X-ray image comparison function of PRIME, X-ray image interpreter can make reference to the previous X-ray image of the same/similar cross boundary vehicle for instant image comparison.



With the system interface of the Departmental Customs Portal, frontline officers can make use of the Self-Learning, Training and Testing Module of PRIME to enhance and assess their X-ray image analysis capacity through their office workstations.

system have been set up in various control points for assisting frontline officers to detect contraband.

The newly developed "PRIME" system is a centralised X-ray image database with multiple functions tailor-made for Customs officers. At the initial stage of system development, LBC co-ordinated with different formations for collecting X-ray images of vehicles, goods and baggage of passengers being captured in the Customs clearance process, in particular those involved with concealment of contraband. AVSECO also provided X-ray images of explosives, firearms, weapons concealed in passengers baggages. These X-ray images were then consolidated and categorised for building up the centralised X-ray image database.

"PRIME" is equipped with comparison function for X-ray images of vehicles. Benefit from the rich X-ray images in the central repository, X-ray image interpreters can retrieve the previous X-ray images of the processed cross-

boundary vehicles for making real-time image comparison. Once there are any suspicious images, X-ray interpreters will direct the inspection officers to pay particular attention during inspection, and the enforcement capability against smuggling activities can thus be strengthened.

Assessment on X-ray image analysing capacity is also one of the built-in functions in "PRIME". Frontline officers can make use of the Self-Learning, Training and Testing Module for reviewing the X-ray images of the past smuggling cases, as well as taking part in the diversified practice and testing so as to sharpen their X-ray image interpreting skill. Supervisors can make effective deployment and arrange focused trainings for officers by referring to their assessment result.

In April and May this year, LBC and Cross-boundary Bridge Command jointly organised the "X-ray Image Analyst Grandmaster Competition 2020", applying for the first time the assessment function of "PRIME" for

the competition. About 70 officers at different ranks participated in the Competition and all set a high value on "PRIME".

The "PRIME" system is expected to be officially rolled out in the end of this year. With the system interface of the Departmental Customs Portal, officers of different formations can access "PRIME" through their office workstations.

"PRIME" is not only a boost to the effectiveness in X-ray image analysis on contraband detection, but also implementing major step in developing the "Smart Boundary Management" under the "Smart Customs Blueprint". The Department commits to applying the innovative technology in enhancing the enforcement capability, while providing effective and efficient Customs clearance service to the public.

Land Boundary Command