

The Customs and Excise Department, formerly known as the Preventive Service, was founded in 1909. In the early days, the Department was mainly responsible for government revenue protection. With the development of society, the Hong Kong Customs took up more duties such as anti-smuggling, narcotics interdiction and intellectual property rights protection. For a century, we have been striving to serve the community, boost the economy and consolidate Hong Kong's position as a trade and commercial hub.

The Hong Kong Customs is answerable to 3 policy Bureaux of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, namely the Security Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau.

Currently, the Hong Kong Customs has an establishment of over 5,000 posts. Of these, over 4,000 are members of the Customs and Excise Service, while the rest are Trade Controls Officers and staff of the Common and General Grades. With functional division of labour, they are deployed to professional posts in 5 different Branches to serve the community.

The mission of the Hong Kong Customs is to help promoting the economy with trade facilitation measures. Meanwhile, we are committed to enforce the law with a view to combating smuggling, protecting government revenue, detecting drug trafficking, protecting intellectual property rights and consumer interests, upholding Hong Kong's trading integrity and fulfilling international obligations.

With its busy international trade, Hong Kong has heavy passenger and freight traffic. Each year, the Hong Kong International Airport accommodates around three hundred thousand flights with over 30 million air passengers. At land boundaries, 15 million vehicles travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland each year with a cross-boundary passenger traffic of over 200 million. For sea transport, Hong Kong's container terminals are among the busiest ports in the world, handling over 21 million standard containers per year.

In the face of heavy passenger and freight traffic, the Hong Kong Customs adopts the anti-smuggling strategy of conducting searches on incoming and outgoing vessels, vehicles, planes as well as cargoes, passengers and their luggage carried by these conveyances based on intelligence analysis and risk profiling.

In addition to law enforcement, we adopt various trade facilitation measures for the purpose of speedy customs clearance.

For instance, the Shenzhen Bay Control Point, which came into operation in 2007, is the first

control point to adopt the “co-location” arrangement. This one-stop clearance service saves a lot of time for both cross-boundary passengers and vehicles travelling between the Mainland and Hong Kong.

In addition, the Hong Kong Customs widely employs high end technology equipment to enhance clearance efficiency and increase the capacity of intercepting smuggling activities.

For customs clearance at land boundaries, the introduction of the Road Cargo System enables registered shippers to submit advanced road cargo information by electronic means. Under the system, truck drivers can also enjoy seamless Customs clearance at all land boundary control points.

Advanced equipment such as Automatic Vehicle Recognition Systems and x-ray scanners have been installed at every land boundary control point so as to effectively speed up the customs clearance procedures.

The Air Cargo Clearance System provides a dedicated round-the-clock platform for air cargo operators to complete clearance formalities via electronic means, thereby expediting the clearance of air cargo to a large extent.

There is no tariff on goods entering Hong Kong but excise duties are levied on four groups of commodities, whether imported or manufactured locally, for domestic consumption. These commodities are tobacco, liquor, hydrocarbon oil and methyl alcohol. Each year, the Hong Kong Customs collects excise duties on dutiable commodities amounting to around one billion US dollars.

In order to protect government revenue, Customs officers proactively detect the smuggling of dutiable commodities and duty evasion behavior.

For anti-narcotics operations, apart from intercepting the smuggling of drugs at the control points, Customs officers also mount proactive investigations and surveillance operations on syndicated drug trafficking activities.

Besides, the Hong Kong Customs also carries out investigations on the laundering of drug proceeds and initiates applications for freezing and confiscating assets derived from drug trafficking.

We also administer a licensing system to control the import, export and dealing of precursor

chemicals for the manufacture of dangerous drugs. We maintain close cooperation and exchange intelligence with various anti-narcotics agencies in the Mainland and overseas in order to combat drug trafficking both at the local and international levels.

The Hong Kong Customs is the enforcement agency responsible for the protection of intellectual property rights. The Department investigates and prosecutes copyright infringement offences relating to literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works, compact discs, films, broadcasts and other publications. Moreover, the Hong Kong Customs also takes enforcement actions against commodities with forged trade marks or false trade descriptions.

The Hong Kong Customs is also responsible for enforcing laws relating to consumer protection, such as legislations on weights and measures, markings on fineness of precious metals, as well as the safety of toys, children's products and consumer goods.

To uphold Hong Kong's trading integrity, the Hong Kong Customs carries out cargo examination at the control points, factory inspections and consignment checks in order to prevent origin frauds.

Furthermore, the import and export of strategic commodities and prohibited articles are monitored under a strictly administered import and export licence system.

For international cooperation, the Hong Kong Customs is a member of the World Customs Organization and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. Apart from working closely and exchanging intelligence with law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and overseas, we also actively participate in international cooperation affairs.

The Hong Kong Customs is one of the Regional Training Centers of the World Customs Organization in the Asia Pacific Region. We contribute to the training of professional Customs officers in the Region by regularly organizing large-scale training courses and seminars.

For a century since its establishment, the Customs and Excise Department has been striving with untiring efforts and optimization of resources to provide quality service. We also aim at striking an optimum balance between law enforcement and trade facilitation.

We will continue to perform our duties with devotion, enthusiasm and initiative in order to display the spirit of "Commitment and Excellence".