

insync

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SINGAPORE CUSTOMS MAGAZINE

— P.01 —

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Highlights of the Year



SPOTLIGHT

No 11.11 deals:
15 caught for buying
duty-unpaid cigarettes



NEWS

Close cooperation with
international counterparts
to facilitate trade

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EDITORS' NOTE

In the blink of an eye, 2021 came and went.

2021 was a special year for Singapore Customs as we turned one hundred and eleven last year. As we step into the new year, we recap the key highlights of 2021 on pages 2 and 3.

Among the highlights of last year was Singapore Customs winning not one, but two public sector awards in July and November 2021 for implementing the electronic Banker's Guarantee programme. Read more on the next page.

Also in November 2021, Singapore Customs was part of a multi-agency team to receive the United Nations 2021 Asia Environmental Enforcement Award in the Collaboration category, for a joint operation between Singapore and China to seize an illegal shipment of an elephant ivory ornament (page 8).

The award highlights the close partnerships among local enforcement agencies and with overseas counterparts, which extend beyond the tackling of the illegal wildlife trade, to enforcement against other types of illicit trade such as illegal liquor and tobacco smuggling (page 7).

While we continue to keep vigilance, we also strive to be a good corporate citizen committed to contributing to the local and international communities. In the second half of 2021, our officers took part in several corporate social responsibility efforts. More on page 12.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of inSYNC.

TAN XIAN LIN AND ISABEL CHIA
Editors

FEATURES

Singapore Customs' eBG programme wins public sector awards

- The electronic Banker's Guarantee programme is part of Singapore Customs' Networked Trade Platform's continuous efforts to connect various parts of the trade and logistics ecosystem to enable stakeholders, in Singapore and abroad, to reap the benefits of digitalisation, connectivity and interoperability, which helps to cement Singapore's status as a leading trade, supply chain and trade financing hub.

Singapore Customs has received the Public Sector Transformation Award for Regulatory Excellence, and the Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative (Silver) Award, in July and November 2021, respectively, for implementing the electronic Banker's Guarantee (eBG) programme.

SMOOTHER, FASTER AND MORE SECURE TRANSACTIONS

The Singapore Customs eBG programme was introduced in November 2020, and guarantees issued by participating banks since have been digital. Traders no longer have to collect hardcopy BGs from the issuing bank and send it to Singapore Customs.

More importantly, typos and other errors which often occur in hardcopy BGs have been eliminated with the use of eBG, and banks only need to transmit each BG's specific data such as the trade, the guarantee amount, validity dates and so on.

eBG not only saves time and effort for traders and banks, but also ensures authenticity of the BG and protects government revenue.

"The Singapore Customs eBG programme is not an e-version of the paper-based BG transmitted electronically. It gives us an opportunity to collaborate with banks to create an entirely new digital way of doing things. The eBG programme demonstrates how we can rely on data to enforce legally binding obligations such as guarantees, and do so in a way that is even more secure and provide a higher level of confidence of authenticity than traditional paper-based legal documents," explained Ms Choo Wai Yee, Director of Networked Trade Platform Office, Singapore Customs.

ENSURING LEGAL STANDING OF DIGITAL BG

A key challenge the Singapore Customs team faced was ensuring the legal standing of the digital BG. Using paper BG has been an industry norm, and eBGs were a novel concept.

Singapore Customs worked closely with banks and the Attorney-General's Chambers to introduce a bilateral agreement between participating banks and



The Singapore Customs team behind the eBG programme.

Singapore Customs to accord legal validity to an eBG. The text spelling out the obligations of the guarantee was incorporated as part of this agreement. This agreement is signed once and enables all parties to rely on the data specific to each guarantee thereafter as legal obligation.

Together with the use of Corppass for identity verification on the Networked Trade Platform, all parties are then assured that the data is coming from an authenticated source and transmitted securely to the rightful party.

With the success of the eBG programme for traders who need to submit a BG to Singapore Customs to meet their regulatory commitments, in 2021, Singapore Customs extended the eBG programme to include procurement-related guarantees from services providers who are awarded contracts with Singapore Customs.

"A first in Singapore, the implementation of the eBG programme was made possible through the close collaboration between Singapore Customs and the participating banks, and signified a successful shift away from traditional norms towards digitalisation and a smart nation," said Ms Choo.

Traders and vendors can approach any of the participating banks (BNP Paribas, DBS Bank, HSBC, OCBC Bank, SMBC and UOB) to apply for an eBG to meet Singapore Customs' regulatory requirement. For more information, please refer to the Customs website at <https://go.gov.sg/electronic-bankers-guarantee-programme>.

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Please let us know what you think of inSYNC. We welcome your ideas on what you would like to see and how we can do better. Write in to the **Editor at customs_media@customs.gov.sg**.



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Highlights of the Year

JANUARY 2021

Singapore Customs commemorated its 111th year anniversary in 2021. A series of staff engagement activities took place, before culminating in a hybrid celebratory event at Revenue House and the Customs Operations Command on 22 January 2021. Most of the guests and staff attended the celebrations virtually, with the activities being streamed live from both offices.

26 JANUARY 2021

Singapore Customs officers celebrated **International Customs Day**, in line with the World Customs Organisation's (WCO) theme of "Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a sustainable supply chain". In view of COVID-19, the celebration was held virtually via video conferencing for the very first time. Nine Singapore Customs officers were awarded the WCO Certificate of Merit.

19 MARCH 2021

Singapore's **Electronic Transactions Act (ETA)** was amended to provide legal validity to electronic Bills of Lading (eBLs) and other Electronic Transferable Records. With the latest amendment, it enables the creation and use of transferable documents and instruments such as eBLs which are key documents for cross-border trade. This allows eBLs to be legally recognised as equivalent to paper Bills of Lading, which would facilitate the adoption of eBLs and the exchange of eBLs between countries and different stakeholders.

JAN - MAR 2021

APR - JUN 2021

JUL - SEP 2021

OCT - DEC 2021

1 JULY 2021

Arising from industry feedback, Singapore Customs implemented the **revised Bonded Truck Scheme**, which allows more companies with robust systems and processes to qualify and handle time-sensitive goods (including parcels) between land checkpoints and Free Trade Zones, under a simplified customs permit, for subsequent re-export or release into customs territory. More on page 13.

30 JULY 2021

Singapore Customs received the Public Sector Transformation Award for Regulatory Excellence, for implementing the **electronic Banker's Guarantee (eBG) programme**, which not only saves time and effort for traders and banks, but also ensures authenticity of the BG and protects government revenue. The programme also won the Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative (Silver) Award in November 2021. More on page 1.

JULY & AUGUST 2021

Singapore Customs officers were involved in several corporate social responsibility efforts spearheaded by our Staff Well-Being Committee in the second half of 2021, including a Read for Books charity drive in July 2021, and a donation drive to purchase oxygen concentrators for Indonesia in August 2021. More on page 12.

Singapore Customs officers mounted a targeted operation to track down offenders who bought duty-unpaid cigarettes from online peddlers via social media platforms. Journalists from the local media were invited to have a first-hand experience on the enforcement operation against buyers of duty-unpaid cigarettes on 13 April 2021.

13 APRIL 2021

ASEAN and Australia Customs administrations established **Project Portcullis 2021**, a joint task force to tackle illicit tobacco smuggling in the region. Throughout June 2021, the administrations shared intelligence on tobacco consignments, which saw more than 50 referrals and led to the seizure of 19 million sticks of smuggled cigarettes in the region. More on page 7.

JUNE 2021

Singapore Customs and the Australian Border Force signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, which allows both administrations to exchange information and render assistance to each other to identify, disrupt and investigate customs offences. More on page 9.

25 JUNE 2021

Singapore Customs and the Customs Administration of the Netherlands held a virtual celebration to mark the start of the Proof of Concept to exchange permit data via the two countries' respective National Single Windows. The initiative aims to facilitate trade between both countries, and enhance trade security through better risk assessment.

1 OCTOBER 2021

Singapore Customs was part of a multi-agency team to receive the United Nations 2021 Asia Environmental Enforcement Award in the Collaboration category, for a joint operation between Singapore and China in May 2021 to seize an illegal shipment of an elephant ivory ornament which had transited through China. More on page 8.

30 NOVEMBER 2021

Local journalists were given a behind-the-scenes exclusive on an island-wide enforcement operation, in the first day of a two-day crackdown against smokers who had purchased duty-unpaid cigarettes on e-commerce platforms or transacted covertly with peddlers at secluded heavy vehicle parks. More on pages 4 and 5.

7 DECEMBER 2021

Singapore Customs and China Customs signed an MOU to establish a Single Window Interconnection Blockchain Consortium using the decentralised blockchain model. The signing of the MOU reaffirms the close working relationship between both Customs administrations and demonstrates the strong commitment to facilitate cross-border trade through the use of technology. More on page 9.

29 DECEMBER 2021



NO 11.11 DEALS: 15 CAUGHT FOR BUYING DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES

Local journalists were given a behind-the-scenes exclusive on an island-wide enforcement operation on 7 December 2021. This was the first day of a two-day crackdown against smokers who had purchased duty-unpaid cigarettes on e-commerce platforms or transacted covertly with peddlers at secluded heavy vehicle parks.

Some buyers thought they could evade detection by going online to make their purchase or obtain supplies from peddlers in secretive transactions. Well, think again. Imagine their surprise when Customs officers came knocking on their doors and taking them to task on the spot for contravening the Customs Act.

Two offenders arrested, another 13 issued with composition sums between \$500 and \$5,000

Fifteen Singaporean men, aged between 21 and 59, were found with duty-unpaid cigarettes in the two-day dragnet. Two were arrested and charged in court for offences under the Customs Act, and the rest issued composition sums ranging from \$500 to \$5,000.

The first arrest case was a 33-year-old security officer who had accepted three parcels of duty-unpaid cigarettes addressed to him, on top of duty-unpaid cigarettes previously delivered to his home. The journalists looked on as the offender was escorted into a car to be brought back to Customs Operations Command for further investigation.

In the second arrest case, a 35-year-old delivery driver was found with duty-unpaid cigarettes in his residence. He also led Customs officer to his motorcycle where more than 10 cartons of cigarettes were hidden. The offender had allegedly purchased the duty-unpaid cigarettes from peddlers at a heavy vehicle park in the vicinity of Upper Bukit Timah Road. The journalists had a glimpse of the haul, and shortly after, the motorcycle which had been seized was towed away.

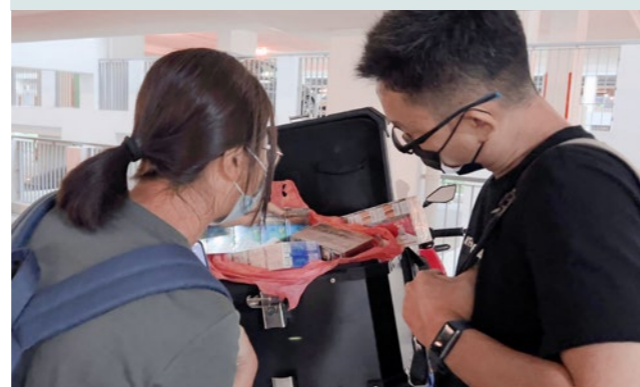
▶ **Case 1: Media photographers capturing shots of offender in the first arrest case being escorted to a vehicle.**



▶ **Case 2: Arrest of 35-year-old delivery driver found with duty-unpaid cigarettes on his motorcycle and in his residence.**



▶ **Case 2: Journalists taking a close-up look at the haul of duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the motorcycle in the second arrest case.**



▶ **Case 3: The Singaporean man, a repeat offender, had bought his stash from peddlers stationed at heavy vehicle parks.**



The media also observed how a 56-year-old repeat offender was issued with a composition sum of \$5,000 on the spot after having his statement taken. He, too, had purchased duty-unpaid cigarettes covertly from peddlers at heavy vehicle park in the vicinity of Upper Bukit Timah Road.

Customs seized a total of 17 cartons, five tins, 46 packets and 87 sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes during the two-day operation. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$2,570 and \$190 respectively.



▶ **Case 3: Customs issued a composition sum of \$5,000 to the 56-year-old reoffender.**

Disguised advertisements of duty-unpaid cigarettes on e-commerce platforms

Some journalists who joined the enforcement operation for the first time were intrigued to learn how peddlers used e-commerce platforms to put out listings for duty-unpaid cigarettes disguised as products such as electronic goods, or have cigarette brands renamed as titles that would be easily relatable to buyers of duty-unpaid cigarettes. For the uninitiated, such listings would not have caught their notice at all.

▶ **Journalists being briefed on how peddlers ingeniously put up duty-unpaid cigarette listings disguised as unrelated products to entice prospective buyers on e-commerce platforms.**



Think you can evade detection? Think again.

Head of Suppression & Community Engagement, Mr Chua Teck Hui, told the journalists that Singapore Customs was monitoring heavy vehicle parks used by peddlers and also working with e-commerce platforms to deter the illegal sales of duty-unpaid cigarettes. For those who purchased from online platforms, they wrongly assumed that the risks of getting caught was low, he added.

▶ **Head of Suppression & Community Engagement, Mr Chua Teck Hui, briefing journalists on the enforcement actions taken against both peddlers and buyers.**



Case files: Enforcement Highlights

CASE 1: HEFTY FINE OF \$587,100 FOR BUSINESSMAN WHO FRAUDULENTLY EVADED GST

A 47-year-old Singaporean man, the co-owner of a business dealing with the import and export of fishes, was fined \$587,100 by the State Courts on 1 October 2021, for fraudulent evasion of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

In October 2019, Singapore Customs initiated an investigation into the offender's business. Between 2015 and 2019, the offender had applied for 1,388

permits for the imports of fishes. The values of the fishes stated in the commercial invoices were under-declared by overseas suppliers at the offender's instruction for declaration in the import permits.

The offender pleaded guilty to one charge of fraudulent evasion of GST (involving 306 permits totalling \$117,420 in GST evaded), with another four similar charges (involving 1,082 permits totalling \$269,210 in GST evaded) taken into consideration during sentencing.

CASE 2: ELEVEN MONTHS' JAIL FOR MAN WHO DELIVERED DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van's cargo compartment and glove compartment.

A 36-year-old Chinese national was handed a 11 months' imprisonment sentence by the State Courts on 1 October 2021 for his involvement in the delivery of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

During an operation on 1 September 2021, Singapore Customs officers arrested the offender in the vicinity of Pasir Ris Drive 6. In addition to 728 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes uncovered in the cargo compartment of a van, small quantity of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found in the vehicle's glove compartment and on the offender.

The offender had rented a van to deliver the duty-unpaid cigarettes, after he purportedly responded to a delivery job request via a messaging platform. The duty and GST evaded amounted to more than \$62,170 and more than \$4,980 respectively. All the duty-unpaid cigarettes found and the van were seized.



A total of 728 cartons, two packets and eight sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.

Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg to report these illegal activities.

Collaborating with regional counterparts to combat illicit activities

- Singapore Customs works closely with regional and international counterparts to enforce against different types of illicit trade, contributing to efforts to safeguard the integrity and security of the global supply chain.

MAJOR SEIZURE OF ILLEGAL LIQUORS IN INDONESIAN WATERS

A joint collaboration between Indonesia Directorate General of Customs and Excise and Singapore Customs led to the successful seizure of a shipment of illegal liquors on 8 November 2021 by the Indonesia authorities.

Acting on information provided by Singapore Customs, the Indonesia authorities detected a wooden ship, suspected to be carrying out illegal loading and unloading activities, in its waters. Consequently, they successfully seized 1,021 boxes (containing 10,515 bottles) of illegal liquors of assorted brands, with an estimated state loss of approximately Rp. 16,874,325,000, or S\$1.6 million.

This seizure is testament to the close collaboration and strong commitment of the two Customs administrations in combatting illicit activities. The synergies established between both Customs administrations will continue to facilitate enforcement against different types of illicit trade.



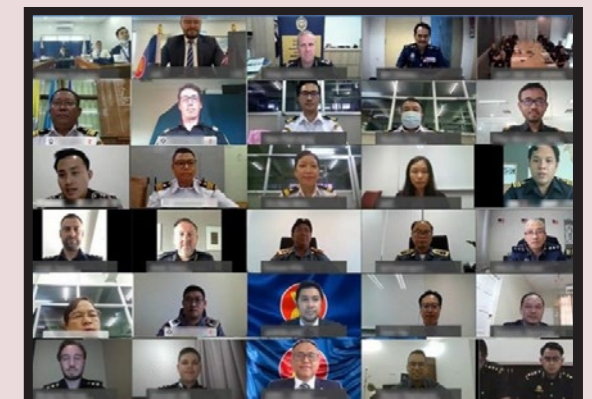
Seizure of 10,515 bottles of illegal liquors of assorted brands by the Indonesia Directorate General of Customs and Excise (Photo: Indonesia Directorate General of Customs and Excise).

LAUNCH OF PROJECT PORTCULLIS 2021 TO TACKLE ILLICIT TOBACCO SMUGGLING

ASEAN and Australia Customs administrations have jointly established Project Portcullis 2021, a joint task force to combat the smuggling of illicit tobacco in the region.

Throughout June 2021, ASEAN and Australia Customs administrations shared intelligence on tobacco consignments to support enhanced targeting opportunities, disruption efforts and enforcement actions against illicit tobacco smuggling across the ASEAN region and Australia, which saw more than 50 referrals and led to the seizure of 19 million sticks of smuggled cigarettes in the region.

The collaboration enabled Customs authorities to scrutinise an increased volume of suspicious sea cargo and land border consignments via the 'Alert Notification System' designed by ASEAN Customs Enforcement and Compliance Working Group.



Members of the Project Portcullis Task Force (Photo: ASEAN Secretariat).

Joint seizure of ivory ornament shipment wins UN award

As a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Singapore is committed to international efforts to curb illegal wildlife trade. The Singapore Government adopts a zero-tolerance stance towards using the Republic as a conduit to smuggle endangered species and their parts and derivatives.

On 30 November 2021, Singapore Customs was part of a multi-agency team, together with the National Parks Board (NParks), the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of General Administration of China Customs, to receive the United Nations (UN) 2021 Asia Environmental Enforcement Award in the Collaboration category.

The award was for a joint operation between Singapore and China in May 2021 to seize an illegal shipment of an elephant ivory ornament which had transited through China. The latest award came at the back of a similar award in November 2019 for the agencies' work in combatting illegal wildlife trade.

Besides having a risk assessment framework to target shipment with illegal wildlife trade, the Singapore authorities also engage in active cooperation with our international counterparts which includes information sharing.

Close partnerships among local enforcement agencies and with international counterparts have



8.8 tonnes of elephant ivory, including raw ivory such as the tusks pictured, were seized in 2019 (Photo: NParks).

enabled Singapore to seize record amounts of pangolin scales and elephant ivory in recent years. Our agencies will continue to collaborate and maintain vigilance to tackle the illegal wildlife trade.

MAJOR MULTI-AGENCY JOINT OPERATIONS IN RECENT YEARS

APR 2019	The joint efforts of Singapore Customs, NParks and ICA resulted in the successful seizures of pangolin scales and elephant ivory in two separate shipments within five days. Worth over \$100 million in total, the shipments had originated from Nigeria and were bound for Vietnam.
JUL 2019	Another major haul of pangolin scales and elephant ivory was seized by Singapore Customs, NParks and ICA. 11.9 tonnes of pangolin scales and 8.8 tonnes of elephant ivory were found in a shipment that was said to contain timber. The successful seizure was a result of the sharing of information from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC).
MAY 2021	The GACC had tipped off Singapore that a suspected elephant ivory ornament consignment was due for delivery to Singapore from France through China. A joint controlled delivery operation was quickly conducted by China and Singapore. Working with ICA and Singapore Customs, NParks intercepted and inspected the consignment, which contained an elephant ivory ornament.

Close cooperation with international counterparts to facilitate trade

Signing of MOU with GACC for Cooperation in Single Window Interconnection Consortium Blockchain

Singapore Customs and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a Single Window Interconnection Blockchain Consortium using the decentralised blockchain model. This will enable the transmission and exchange of trade and customs-related information between Singapore and China.

The MOU was signed by Singapore's Ambassador to China, Mr Lui Tuck Yew, and GACC's Minister, Mr Ni Yuefeng, and was announced at the 17th China-Singapore Joint Council for Bilateral Cooperation Meeting on 29 December 2021.

The first use of the blockchain will be to exchange customs clearance and logistics status information port-to-port for containerised trade between Singapore and China. The information will be made available to traders and logistics players in both countries. This service will be available to Singapore businesses via the Networked Trade Platform in 2022.

The first service will provide timely updates on containerised cargo movements between China and Singapore to Singapore-based traders and logistics companies. The enhanced visibility will enable businesses to better manage their physical supply chains and financial flows, thereby improving decision-making to help businesses stay competitive.

The signing of the MOU reaffirms the close working relationship between both Customs administrations and demonstrates the strong commitment to facilitate cross-border trade through the use of technology.

Conclusion of blockchain trial with ABF

In August 2021, Australian Border Force (ABF), the Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA), and Singapore Customs, along with industry

participants, announced the conclusion of a blockchain trial to prove trade documents could be issued and verified digitally across two independent systems, reducing cross-border transaction costs.

The blockchain trial was initiated as part of the Australia-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement to make cross-border trade simpler between the two countries. The trial successfully tested the interoperability of two digital verification systems – the ABF's Intergovernmental Ledger and IMDA's TradeTrust reference implementation.

In using this blockchain-based, decentralised approach, transactions can become more cost effective and offers scalability without the need for expensive data exchange infrastructure, lowering barriers to the adoption of paperless cross-border trade.

Video conference with ABF Commissioner

On 25 June 2021, Director-General of Singapore Customs, Mr Ho Chee Pong, and the Commissioner of ABF, Mr Michael Outram, held a video conference to discuss various trade facilitation initiatives undertaken bilaterally, and at ASEAN and the World Customs Organisation level.

The virtual meeting concluded with the signing of an MOU on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, which allows both administrations to exchange information and render assistance to each other to identify, disrupt and investigate customs offences.



The signatories for the MOU: Director-General of Singapore Customs, Mr Ho Chee Pong (left), and Commissioner of ABF, Mr Michael Outram (on the screen).

News round-up for traders

Here is a round-up of recent circulars from Singapore Customs for the trading community:



Cargo clearance at Tuas Checkpoint (Photo: ICA).

Cessation of physical endorsement for CCPs

With effect from 1 February 2022, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers at the cargo checkpoints will cease to manually endorse Cargo Clearance Permits (CCPs) presented for clearance to improve the cargo clearance process at the checkpoints. Nonetheless, drivers are still required to present the physical copy of the CCP for clearance as per the requirement specified in the permit conditions, along with the relevant supporting documents.

This will contribute towards improving the cargo clearance process at the checkpoints since drivers will no longer have to wait for the CCPs to be endorsed after they are cleared by ICA officers, reducing the turnaround time for vehicles and cargo passing through the checkpoints.

In the longer term, the aim is to move towards full digitalisation, without the need for drivers to present hardcopy CCPs, and achieve a seamless and secure cargo clearance experience for both containerised and conventional cargo.

A six-month adjustment period till 31 July 2022 will be given to help business prepare for the change. During the adjustment period, drivers may still request for ad-hoc endorsements if required.

For more information, please refer to **Circular 11/2021** on the Customs website.

Duty exemption on hearses for the undertaking industry

The undertaking industry has been exempted from payment of excise duty on importation of a hearse, with effect from 3 September 2021. Previously, the importation of hearses was subject to an excise duty of 20 percent.

To qualify for the exemption, the hearse must be registered in the name of the business entity, and registered under the Road Traffic Act as a goods vehicle.

Excise duty will be re-imposed if the business entity contravenes any of the conditions or transfers the hearse to a non-entitled person.

For more information, please refer to **Circular 09/2021** on the Customs website.

Registration as exporter of duty and GST-unpaid liquor and/or tobacco sea stores

From 26 July 2021, all exporters of duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST)-unpaid liquor and/or tobacco sea stores for consumption onboard a vessel by the crew and passengers outside Singapore waters must be registered with Singapore Customs before they can obtain an export permit via TradeNet.

Exporters may register via the "Application for Registration as an Exporter of Duty and GST-Unpaid Liquor and/or Tobacco Sea Stores" form, which is available on Singapore Customs website <http://www.customs.gov.sg> > E-Services > Customs Forms & Service Links > Registration Forms.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their registration in due course. Upon approval, the registration validity will be three years, subject to renewal.

For more information, please refer to **Circular 05/2021** on the Customs website.

What are sea stores?

Sea stores refer to goods supplied for consumption or use on board a vessel by the crew and passengers outside Singapore waters. Examples include food, water, cleaning supplies, medical supplies, safety supplies and spare parts.

Non-dutiable sea stores can be uplifted onto all vessel types. Dutiable sea stores can only be uplifted to approved types of vessels, and are subject to ration allowance restrictions.

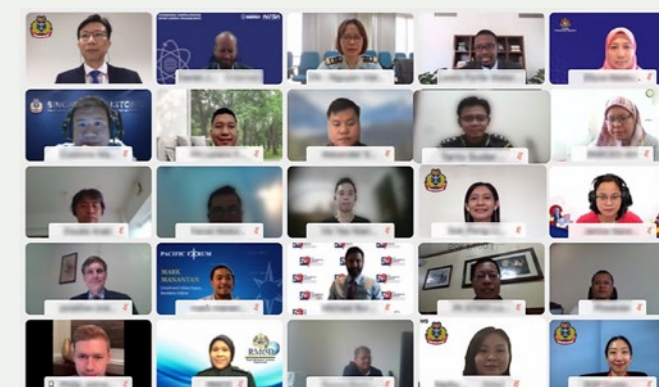
For more information, please refer to the **Supply of Air/Sea Stores** page on the Customs website.

Inaugural forum on export controls for South East Asian countries

Forty-six government officials from nine countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam) attended an inaugural forum on export controls for South East Asian countries on 30 September 2021, to share and discuss issues and challenges relating to export controls.

Key topics covered at the virtual forum included presentations on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 1540 in South East Asia by the Group of Experts supporting the UNSC 1540 Committee, as well as Strategic Trade Controls and their impact on trade and investment by the Pacific Forum¹.

South East Asian countries which participated also shared on their respective export control regimes and best practices, and discussed areas for future collaboration on export controls across the region.



Attendees of the inaugural forum on export controls for South East Asian countries.

The forum was jointly organised by Singapore Customs, in collaboration with the US Bureau of Industry and Security, the US Export Control and Related Border Security, the US Department of Energy, and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

¹The Pacific Forum is a non-profit, foreign policy research institute founded in 1975 and based in the United States.

New STP partners on board

The Secure Trade Partnership (STP) is a Singapore Customs certification programme that encourages companies to adopt robust security measures and contribute towards improving the security

of the global supply chain. It is consistent with the World Customs Organisation SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. The following companies were STP-certified in the second and third quarters of 2021.

Jurong Port Universal Terminal Pte Ltd

Oil storage terminal providing tank storage, handling and blending of petroleum products

"We are proud to have been awarded the STP-Plus certification once again. This proves that our company has put in place robust security measures to ensure that our security standards are raised to meet the highest level. We remain committed to safeguard the integrity and security of the global supply chain," said Mr Loh Wei, Chief Executive Officer.

Global Consolidators Pte Ltd

Integrated logistics solutions provider

"The STP certification is our commitment to our clients and partners on our high level of services in providing total visibility, connectivity and security of their goods," said Mr Jay Prakash, Managing Director.



Contributing to local and international communities through CSR efforts

Singapore Customs strives to be a good corporate citizen, and is committed to contributing to the local and international communities. In the second half of 2021, Singapore Customs officers were involved in several corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts spearheaded by our Staff Well-Being Committee.

Find out more below:



Singapore Customs volunteers helping to man mouth gargle collection booths in their free time, and helping seniors with the registration process.

Nationwide distribution of mouth gargles

Volunteers from the Ministry of Finance Family, including Singapore Customs, helped to support Temasek Foundation's nationwide distribution of mouth gargles outside selected Singapore Pools outlets from 22 November 2021 to 12 December 2021.

The exercise clocked a total of over 7,500 hours distributing the mouth gargle and helping seniors register digitally with the collection. It benefitted over 74,600 households, which accounted for more than 50 percent of the total mouth gargles collected by the public island-wide.



Oxygen concentrators purchased by organisations which took part in the donation drive (Photo: CAG).

Donation drive to purchase oxygen concentrators

In August 2021, a donation drive was held to coordinate voluntary monetary contributions from Singapore Customs staff to purchase oxygen concentrators to alleviate medical supply crunch in Indonesia due to COVID-19. The amount raised was used to purchase six units of oxygen concentrators.

The humanitarian effort to provide aid to Indonesia was coordinated by the Changi Airport Group (CAG), which had worked with the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore to identify critical medical supplies needed to support the treatment of COVID-19 patients with respiratory conditions.



One of the reading sessions conducted virtually.

Read for Books Charity Drive 2021

Singapore Customs officers participated in the National Reading Movement organised by the National Library Board (NLB) in July 2021, to share the gift of reading with the less privileged. For every 10 people who read for 15 minutes, one book would be donated to NLB's selected beneficiaries. In two sessions held virtually via video conferencing during lunch time, participants from Singapore Customs clocked a total of 1,440 minutes for charity, surpassing the figure clocked in 2020.

DO YOU KNOW?

REVISED BONDED TRUCK SCHEME

Arising from industry feedback, Singapore Customs has implemented the revised Bonded Truck Scheme (BTS), with effect from 1 July 2021. The revised BTS allows more companies with robust systems and processes to qualify and handle time-sensitive goods (including parcels) between land checkpoints and Free Trade Zones (FTZs), under a simplified customs permit, for subsequent re-export or release into customs territory.



REVISED FEATURES

Some of the revised features are as follows:

- Removal of the minimum five percent local release requirement for both inbound and outbound movements, whereby less than five percent of the inbound/outbound consignments (in terms of total cost, insurance and freight values) are allowed to be released locally; and
- Removal of the requirement to register all BTS vehicles with Singapore Customs if the company has a robust track-and-trace system in-place.

TO QUALIFY FOR THE REVISED BTS

Some of the main qualifying criteria a company must fulfil are listed below:

- **[New]** Handle non-homogenous goods (involving multiple consignees) with movements between land checkpoints and FTZs;

Note: Previously BTS licence holders are allowed for movements between land checkpoints and Changi FTZ only.
- Have a system to track-and-trace all goods enabling end-to-end oversight of all goods;
- Have a fleet management system to manage and monitor all vehicles used under the BTS; and
- Undergo TradeFIRST assessment and attain the "Premium" band.

BENEFITS OF BTS FOR LICENCE HOLDERS

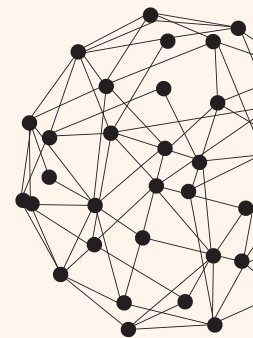
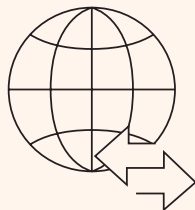
- Potential cost and time savings for BTS licence holders. Instead of declaring multiple permits covering goods of multiple importers/exporters, a BTS licence holder only needs to declare one BTS simplified permit to clear the checkpoints in Singapore. Furthermore, the transportation costs to import/export goods via road by BTS, may be cheaper than via the air mode.

For more information, please visit the BTS page on the Customs website at <https://www.customs.gov.sg/businesses/customs-schemes-licences-framework/bonded-truck-scheme>.

TRAINING CALENDAR

With the appointment of Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) and Republic Polytechnic (RP) to conduct the existing suite of business courses from January 2020, the business courses conducted by Singapore Customs Academy has ceased from January 2020.

To sign up for the business courses conducted by NYP or RP, please visit the respective polytechnic's website. All courses will be conducted virtually, except for SC111.



SC100

NYP:
7 TO 8 MAR 2022
SC101

9 MAR 2022
Same date for SC102 & SC103

RP:
14 TO 15 MAR 2022
SC101

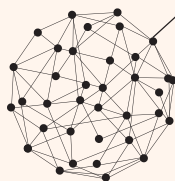
16 MAR 2022
Same date for SC102 & SC103

BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT

This course provides 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:

- 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.



SC111

NYP:
11 MAR 2022

RP:
17 MAR 2022

HANDS-ON TRADENET DECLARATION

This one-day workshop provides new declarants with basic information on TradeNet and its various message and declaration types.

The guided practical session uses simulated scenarios to prepare and submit a declaration using the Government Frontend Solution.

SC200

NYP:
10 MAR 2022
Same date for SC201 & SC202

RP:
18 MAR 2022
Same date for SC201 & SC202

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.

[WEBINAR] OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS [28 FEB 2022]

This 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 procedure for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements.

For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg.