



IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

‘Ciggies’ - the latest mobile cigarettes truck

We have heard of mobile library, mobile washing kart and the familiar mobile ice cream vans. But have you ever heard of a mobile cigarettes truck? Well, it is no surprise if you have not heard. The new model was only revealed yesterday by officers from the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and the Singapore Customs (SC).

2. On 24 March 2011 at around 6pm, workers from the Bedok Industrial Park were streaming out from their work places as usual. However, unknown to them, a group of ICA and SC officers were patiently lying in wait.

3. At about 6.45pm, a male Singaporean Chinese had arrived at the industrial park in a cab, and was seen walking towards a Singapore-registered truck. He took out a bunch of keys from his pockets and used them to unlock the padlocks securing the truck’s side doors. When the truck doors were swung open, the officers observed that the truck was almost fully laden with brown cement bags. At this juncture, the same cab had returned to the same spot to pick up the male Chinese. Observing the 46-year-old Singaporean leaving hastily, the quick-witted officers sensed something amiss and trailed the man. They intercepted him at Upper Changi Road and escorted him back to Bedok Industrial Park.



'Ciggies' - the mobile cigarettes trucks



Cement or something more?

4. Using the keys found in his possession, the officers opened the bonded truck and found assorted brands of contraband cigarettes wrapped in brown cement bags. The Singaporean man was immediately placed under arrest.

5. Preliminary investigation revealed that the Singaporean man also had access to another Singapore-registered truck parked nearby. The officers uncovered more assorted brands of contraband cigarettes in this truck. The male Singaporean shared that he was persuaded to distribute contraband cigarettes to peddlers by a man known as "Ah Seow". He was promised \$100 per day and his job was to unlock the side doors of the truck for illegal peddlers to retrieve the contraband cigarettes. A total of 6,504 cartons and 6,042 loose packets of contraband cigarettes were uncovered. The potential duty and GST involved amounted to about \$500,420 and \$45,280 respectively.



Assorted brands of contraband cigarettes found in “Ciggies”.

6. Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders can be fined up to 20 times the amount of duty evaded and liable to a jail term not exceeding three years. For second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded and jailed for up to six years. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded. The vehicles used in conveying this contraband will also be liable for forfeiture.

7. SC warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited. The public is strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possession

of a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers may face a minimum composition sum of \$500 or prosecution in court.

8. Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's security. The enhanced security checks are critical to our nation's security. We have tightened our security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and contrabands.

9. Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST should contact the Singapore Customs Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.

**ISSUED BY: IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY (移民与关卡局)
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DATE: 28 MARCH 2011