

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS
JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**



Wholesaler fined \$1.01 million and jailed eight months for tobacco offences

15 December 2015

Ng Teck Beng, 46, a repeat offender, was sentenced by the State Courts on 9 December 2015 to a total fine of about \$1.01 million and eight months' imprisonment for the wholesaling of *ang hoon*¹ without a valid tobacco import and wholesale licence, and for storing duty-unpaid *ang hoon*.

Ng's illegal dealings were uncovered when officers from the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and Singapore Customs, acting on a tip-off, raided two units in Golden Mile Complex on 2 April 2014. A total of 11,375 pouches, 51 slabs and three bags (106.26kg) of duty-unpaid *ang hoon*, were seized from the two units. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded \$35,110. Investigations revealed that these premises were used by Ng to deal in duty-unpaid *ang hoon*.

Ng, the sole proprietor of Wei Teck Distribution, was issued a tobacco import and wholesale licence in October 2005. However, he was convicted in April 2013 for the possession of duty-unpaid tobacco. His licence, which was suspended by HSA for six months, subsequently expired.

Nevertheless, Ng continued to supply more than 65,000 pieces of *ang hoon* to other business entities between December 2013 and March 2014. He pleaded guilty to 20 charges of wholesaling *ang hoon* without a valid tobacco import and wholesale licence. For this, he was fined \$63,900, or in default 51 weeks' imprisonment. 41 other charges were taken into consideration in the sentencing.

Ng also pleaded guilty to two charges of storing duty-unpaid *ang hoon*. He was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment and \$955,000 in fines, or in default 10 months' imprisonment. Two other charges were taken into consideration in the sentencing. Ng began serving his sentence on 11 December 2015.

Reminder to tobacco suppliers

HSA and Singapore Customs take a serious stance in deterring the illegal supply of tobacco products. It is an offence under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act to import, distribute, sell or offer for sale, or have in possession for sale any tobacco products without a valid tobacco import and wholesale licence or tobacco retail licence.

¹ 1 A type of tobacco which comprises loose self-rolling tobacco leaves

The penalty is a fine of up to \$5,000 for the first offence and a fine of up to \$10,000 for the second or subsequent offence.

Under the Customs Act and the GST Act, those caught buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are liable to a fine of up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded, or imprisonment for up to six years, or both.

The minimum court fines for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences are \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment.

Members of the public with information on the supply of tobacco products without a valid licence can call HSA's Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 6684 2036 or 6684 2037 during office hours (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday). If they have information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST, they can contact the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg

Annex A

WHOLESALER FINED \$1.01 MILLION AND JAILED EIGHT MONTHS FOR TOBACCO OFFENCES

Photographs of the Seized Tobacco





