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SINGAPORE CUSTOMS NEWSLETTER
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01 Enforcement within Free Trade Zones

HIGHLIGHTS

03

Singapore Customs Detains
Trademark-Infringing Goods

06

Singapore Customs
Facilitates National Library
Board's Festival

09

TradeNet's Permit Listing
Service Enhanced

Enforcement Against Illicit Trade

Free Trade Zones (FTZs) are primarily used for the temporary storage of goods and to facilitate entrepôt trade, as duties and Goods and Services Tax (GST) on cargo within these zones are suspended. To enforce against illicit trade and customs offences such as smuggling, Singapore Customs conducts regular and surprise operations and inspections in the FTZs. Read about three such operations that took place.

In April, Singapore Customs detained more than 2,300 trademark-infringing goods. These counterfeit items were imported from China via several air shipments. Singapore Customs has a firm commitment towards a robust intellectual property rights (IPR) regime in Singapore through our IPR enforcement efforts, and does not condone such illegal trading activities. Find out more on page 03.

While actively enforcing against illicit trade, efforts are also in place to continually make trade easier. TradeNet's Permit Listing service has been enhanced with new features and functionalities, and the Hong Kong-Singapore Mutual Recognition Arrangement is now operational. Traders can find the details on page 10.

Singapore Customs also supports projects that are educational for the public, such as the National Library Board's (NLB) *Geo | Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories* festival, which features rare old maps that played a critical role in the development of Singapore and Southeast Asia. Special facilitation was granted to NLB for the temporary import of the high-value maps. Turn to page 07 to learn more about this historical exhibition.

Neo Wen Tong
Editor

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 01 Enforcement within Free Trade Zones
- 03 Singapore Customs Detains Trademark-Infringing Goods

UPDATES

- 04 Two Handbag Retailers Fined for Fraudulent Evasion of GST
- 06 Singapore Customs Facilitates National Library Board's Festival
- 08 Four Malaysian Men Charged for Involvement in Contraband Cigarette Activities
- 09 TradeNet's Permit Listing Service Enhanced
- 10 Implementation of the Hong Kong-Singapore Mutual Recognition Arrangement

INSIDE CUSTOMS

- 12 Homecoming for Customs Officers
- 13 Training Calendar



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Enforcement within Free Trade Zones

Singapore Customs conducts regular and surprise inspections in the Free Trade Zones (FTZs) to enforce against illicit trade and customs offences such as smuggling.



Operation in Changi FTZ: Some 300 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found hidden under mobile phone covers.

Singapore has 10 FTZs in five geographical areas operated by three FTZ authorities.

These FTZs are established to facilitate entrepôt trade. Duties and Goods and Services Tax (GST) on cargo within the FTZs are suspended, and are only payable when the goods leave the FTZ and enter customs territory for local distribution.

There are controls in place to regulate activities in FTZs. For instance, there are strict limits on the activities permissible within the FTZs – thus the FTZs are used primarily for the temporary storage of goods.

FTZs are also subjected to the same laws and regulations of Singapore as businesses and activities outside FTZs. Permits are still required, except for transshipment of non-controlled goods within the same FTZ and goods in transit. The Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) is stationed at the checkpoints to clear goods from the FTZs.

To enforce against illicit trade and customs offences such as smuggling, Singapore Customs conducts regular and surprise operations and inspections in the FTZs.

OPERATION IN CHANGI FTZ

Singapore Customs officers conducted a check on a consignment within the Changi FTZ in February 2015, and found duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden under mobile phone covers. About 300 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. The offender was charged in court and sentenced to seven months' imprisonment.

Airfreight terminals, express courier centres, cargo agent buildings and offices are located within the Changi FTZ, which provides a one-stop location for efficient clearance for all types of cargo.

Continued ►

OPERATION IN KEPPEL FTZ

Singapore Customs officers conducted a check on a consignment in Keppel Distripark in August 2014. Upon inspection, 612 cartons and 936 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found hidden inside units of water dispensers. The consignment of water dispensers and the duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized in the operation.

Keppel Distripark, located within the Keppel FTZ, is a multi-tenanted, modern cargo distribution complex comprising warehousing and office facilities.



Operation in Keppel FTZ: Duty-unpaid cigarettes were found hidden within the water dispensers.

OPERATION IN JURONG PORT

Singapore Customs officers inspected a 20-foot container said to be carrying eight pallets of boxes containing remote controlled toy cars. However, upon inspection, officers discovered that the consignment contained cartons of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes. A total quantity of 12,800 cartons of assorted brands duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized in the March 2014 operation.

Jurong Port is a leading international multi-purpose port operator handling general, bulk and containerised cargo located within the Jurong FTZ.



Operation in Jurong Port: Assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes were hidden within a consignment of remote controlled toy cars.

The success of the cases was made possible by the continued efforts of officers, trading partners, ICA, and the FTZ authorities.

"Singapore does not condone any illicit trading activities in the FTZs," said Mr Yeo Sew Meng, Assistant Director-General (Intelligence and Investigation), Singapore Customs. "We will not hesitate to clamp down on illegal activities and bring the offenders to justice."

Besides checking for violations, Singapore Customs also takes the opportunity to reach out to warehouse operators to convey the "red flags" and dangers of dealing with contraband cigarettes and encourage them to provide information on illegal activities. **i**

Information can be provided through the Singapore Customs hotline at 1800-233-0000, or by emailing customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg. All information received will be treated in strict confidence.

For more information on documentation in FTZs, visit www.customs.gov.sg

Singapore Customs Detains Trademark-Infringing Goods

Singapore Customs detained more than 2,300 trademark-infringing goods on 8 April 2015. These counterfeit goods were imported from China via several air shipments.

The following are some of the counterfeit goods detained by Singapore Customs:



50 sets of counterfeit earphones.



600 sets of counterfeit earphones.



180 units of counterfeit power banks.



20 counterfeit bags.

During an inspection at the importer's warehouse at Kaki Bukit Avenue, Singapore Customs enforcement officers found an assortment of mobile phone accessories, watches, sunglasses, bags, wallets suspected to be counterfeit goods of popular brands.

Singapore Customs then notified the brand owners about the detention, and several of them have taken action regarding these trademark-infringing goods.

"Singapore does not condone such illegal trading activities," said Mr Yeo Sew Meng, Assistant Director-General (Intelligence and Investigation), Singapore Customs.

"Singapore Customs will take firm action against importers who bring in counterfeit goods. We will uphold our commitment to ensure a robust intellectual property rights enforcement regime in Singapore," said Mr Yeo. 

Anyone with specific information on illegal trading activities can report it to Singapore Customs via email (customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg). All information received will be treated in strict confidence.

Two Handbag Retailers Fined for Fraudulent Evasion of GST

Two handbag retailers were sentenced by the State Courts on 15 April 2015 for the fraudulent evasion of Goods and Services Tax (GST).



Some of the branded handbags imported by Tang for which GST had been under-declared.

Tang Wai Chuen Adrian, 42, and Ong Siew Hong, 60, were fined \$95,000 and \$42,000 respectively. They had under-declared the value of their imported goods in fake invoices submitted to Singapore Customs.

Between January 2013 and June 2014, Tang had imported 3,390 branded handbags – from the United States (US), Italy and Malaysia – on 80 occasions. The under-declaration of the import values of the goods resulted in a shortfall of about \$55,606 in GST payment.

Tang, the owner of MBE Trading & Services, pleaded guilty to 10 charges. Another 70 charges were taken into consideration in the sentencing.

In the other case, Ong, director of Be Bonita Fashion and Apparels Pte Ltd, was caught for submitting fake invoices with the import declarations to Singapore Customs. Investigations revealed that between May 2013 and November 2014, she had imported 2,024 branded handbags and 1,505 pieces of accessories – such as wristlets, phone cases, children toys and travel adapters – on 13 occasions.

The total amount of GST evaded exceeded \$7,360. Ong pleaded guilty to four charges. Another nine charges were taken into consideration in the sentencing.



It is the responsibility of importers to ensure the accuracy and completeness of declarations submitted to Singapore Customs.

- Mr Yeo Sew Meng, Assistant Director-General (Intelligence & Investigation), Singapore Customs



Branded handbags and accessories seized from Ong's company premises.

It is the responsibility of importers to ensure the accuracy and completeness of declarations submitted to Singapore Customs," said Mr Yeo Sew Meng, Assistant Director-General (Intelligence & Investigation), Singapore Customs.

"Evasion and under-declaration of

GST are serious offences under the Customs Act. All cases of revenue evasion and violations of Customs regulations are investigated. Anyone found involved in abetting the fraudulent evasion of duty and GST will be dealt with severely," said Mr Yeo. **i**

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS ADVISORY

Under the Customs Act, any person who is guilty of fraudulent evasion of duties or GST will be liable on conviction to a fine of up to 20 times the amount of duty and GST evaded,

or imprisonment, or both. In addition to the penalties meted out by the court, offenders are also required to make good the duty and GST under-paid.

Members of the public with information

on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330-000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg

Singapore Customs Facilitates National Library Board's Festival

Special facilitation for the temporary import of high-value old maps was accorded to the National Library Board, contributing to the successful launch of the *Geo|Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories* festival.

The *Geo|Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories* festival, organised by the National Library Board (NLB), presents a range of exhibitions and programmes that explore the concept of maps and mapping.

Visitors will be able to discover the world of maps and expand their knowledge on Singapore and Southeast Asia.

The exhibitions underscore how maps have played a critical role in the development of the region. Notably, 16 pieces of high-value old maps from the 17th to 20th century were temporarily imported for the showcase.

TEMPORARY IMPORT OF RARE MAPS

Under Singapore Customs regulations, importers are required to lodge a security in the form of a Banker's Guarantee or Insurance Bond for temporary imports. The amount required is determined based on the type of goods, and the taxable status of the importer.


For the temporary import of the maps by NLB, the security required was calculated to be close to \$70,000.

Singapore Customs assessed NLB's request to waive the security, and granted approval for the waiver as the exhibitions will have significant educational benefits for the general public.

"The National Library Board is appreciative of the assistance by

Singapore Customs for the import of rare maps on loan from two countries for our exhibition, *Geo|Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories*. Singapore Customs expedited our application for the temporary import licence. The professionalism of the staff left a positive impression with our overseas counterparts," said Mr Alvin Koh, Project Manager, Exhibitions & Curation, NLB.

Waiving the security requirement also helped NLB ease their financial outlay as the exhibitions are open to the public free-of-charge.

The *Geo|Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories* festival was launched by Minister for Communications and Information Yaacob Ibrahim on 15 January 2015, and will run till 19 July 2015 at the National Library Building. 

TEMPORARY IMPORT SCHEME

Goods, with the exception of liquor and tobacco, are allowed to be imported for repairs and other approved purposes such as stage performances, testing, experiments and demonstrations without

the payment of duty and/or Goods and Services Tax (GST), provided that they are re-exported within six months from the date of importation. When necessary, importers may request for an extension

of the temporary import period, by furnishing relevant justification to Singapore Customs for assessment.

To find out more about the scheme, visit www.customs.gov.sg



Singapore Customs expedited our application for the temporary import licence. The professionalism of the staff left a positive impression with our overseas counterparts.

- Mr Alvin Koh, Project Manager, Exhibitions & Curation, NLB.

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The Geo | Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories festival, organised by the National Library Board, presents a range of exhibitions and programmes that explore the concept of maps and mapping. (Photos: National Library Board)


Four Malaysian Men Charged for Involvement in Contraband Cigarette Activities

A total of 3,700 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes worth more than \$409,000 were seized. The men were charged in the State Courts on 27 May 2015.

Ng Kuan Hwa, 25; Ooi Teik Wei, 27; Gooi Chin Lean, 25; and Tay Chee Yong, 21, were arrested on 25 May 2015 by Singapore Customs officers. A total of 3,700 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes worth more than \$409,000 were seized. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded \$334,000. Two Singapore-registered vehicles – a van and a lorry – were also seized.

On the afternoon of 25 May 2015, officers from Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) kept a close watch on a warehouse unit at Woodlands Industrial Park.

At about 4pm, suspecting that there were illegal cigarette activities going on in the warehouse, the officers moved in and raided the unit. They saw Ng, Ooi, Gooi and Tay in the unit and found 3,700 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes, which had been retrieved from the hollow spaces within 12 concrete barriers. The four men were arrested and the duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.

Court proceedings are ongoing for the four men. 



The duty-unpaid cigarettes were concealed in hollow spaces within the blocks of concrete barriers.



A total of 3,700 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized in this operation.

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS ADVISORY

Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the Goods and Services (GST) Act. Offenders will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or

jailed for up to six years.

The minimum court fine 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. Vehicles used

in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

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

TradeNet's Permit Listing Service Enhanced

As part of Singapore Customs' journey towards service excellence, new features and functions have been introduced in TradeNet since 13 April 2015.

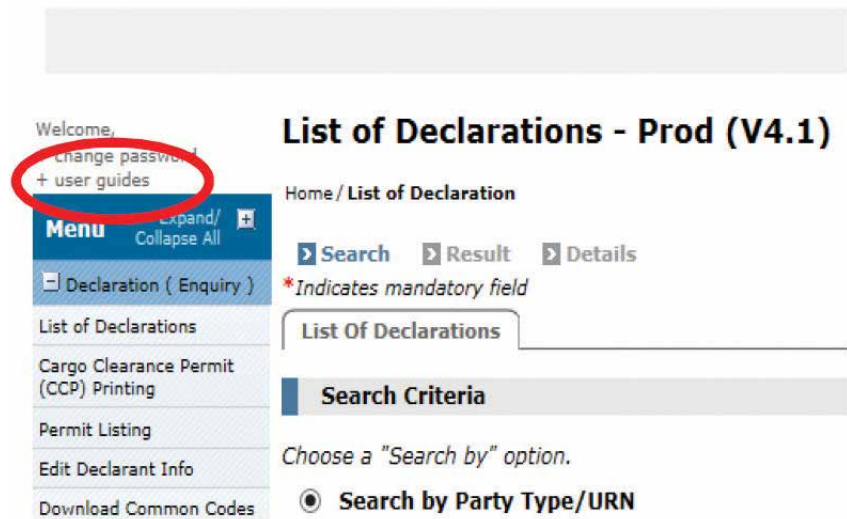
The Permit Listing service was first introduced in October 2007, together with TradeNet version 4.0.

This service allows for the retrieval of permit information using the permit number/Unique Reference Number or Entity Identifier/Unique Entity Number via the 'Permit Listing' module, where a list of fields can be generated in Microsoft Excel format based on search criteria. Users can view, download or print permit information. It is accessible by all TradeNet declarants and users with valid TradeNet IDs via the TradeNet Backend User Interface.

Retrieval of information for permits approved within a year is a free service, while the listing generated for permits approved outside the timeframe of one year is chargeable at \$15 for each permit retrieved.

Since 13 April 2015, the following new features and functionalities have been introduced in the Permit Listing service:


- 32 new data fields (For example: Message Type, Declaration Type, End User Name).
- Data fields are classified into various categories (For example: Party, Licence, Invoice, Item Details) for easier reference.
- Users can select which data fields to include for a customised permit listing format.
- The availability period of the report has been extended from two days to five days.



With the introduction of the new data fields, traders will have access to a richer database of information on their transactions.

For example, exporters can closely monitor their compliance with the Advance Export Declaration (AED) requirement by comparing the permit approval date against the departure date of the export. AED

was implemented on 1 April 2013 and all declarations have to be submitted before the goods are exported, including non-controlled and non-dutiable goods exported by sea and air.

A user guide on the new features of the Permit Listing service can be found at the top left corner of the screen after logging in to the TradeNet Backend User Interface. 

For more information and Frequently Asked Questions, read Notice 03/2015 at www.customs.gov.sg. For clarifications, email customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg or call 6355 2000.

Implementation of the Hong Kong-Singapore Mutual Recognition Arrangement

The Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) has been operational since 9 March 2015.

With the MRA now operational, the Customs and Excise Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (HK C&ED) recognises Singapore's Secure Trade Partnership-Plus (STP-Plus) companies as being of lower risk.

Quicker clearance is thus granted for goods that are exported to or imported from these companies. Singapore Customs extends the same treatment to Hong Kong's AEO companies and to the goods that are exported to or imported from these companies.

This MRA on Authorised Economic Operators (AEO) was signed in June 2014 as part of Singapore Customs' continual efforts to enhance global supply chain security and facilitate the movement of legitimate goods.



STP-PLUS COMPANIES EXPORTING TO OR IMPORTING FROM HONG KONG

For STP-Plus companies who are exporting to or importing from Hong Kong companies, provide your company name and operating address certified under the STP programme to your business partners/carriers in Hong Kong. Your business partners/carriers in Hong Kong need not be an AEO company.

EXPORTING TO OR IMPORTING FROM HONG KONG AEO COMPANIES

For Singapore companies who are exporting to or importing from Hong Kong AEO companies, obtain the AEO Code from your Hong Kong business partner (an AEO company) and declare it in the TradeNet export or import declaration.

DOMESTIC FACILITATED CLEARANCE FOR STP-PLUS AND STP IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS

To enjoy a higher level of facilitated clearance in Singapore, STP-Plus and STP importers and exporters are to declare their STP Code in the TradeNet import and export declarations. ⓘ

For clarifications, email customs_schemes@customs.gov.sg or call 6355 2000.

New STP Companies on Board

Four companies joined the Secure Trade Partnership (STP) scheme in the first quarter of 2015. STP is a voluntary certification programme that encourages companies to adopt robust security measures and contribute to improving the security of the global supply chain.

CWT Globelink Pte Ltd

CWT Globelink was established in 1988 to provide international freight forwarding services. It has grown to become one of the global leading neutral Non Vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC) operators with its core business in Less-Than-Container Load (LCL) cargo consolidation. Headquartered in Singapore, CWT Globelink is a wholly-owned subsidiary of CWT Limited, a public-listed company in Singapore.

"As a trusted partner of Singapore Customs, CWT Globelink will contribute to enhanced security as part of the global supply chain in the transportation process and its warehouse premises. In return, CWT Globelink enjoys recognition in enhanced security with expedited clearance through Mutual Recognition Arrangements with other countries, including the United States Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) and New Zealand Customs Service. CWT Globelink Container Freight Station also operates 24/7 with staff and operators well-trained in supply chain security," said Mr Daniel Tok, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer.

DSV Air & Sea Pte Ltd

DSV is a global supplier of transport and logistics solutions, with offices in more than 70 countries and an international network of partners and agents.

"We are able to show our commitment to our valued customers, who now enjoy more privileges due to the enhanced security recognition from Singapore Customs. The STP certification shows DSV's commitment to the global supply chain security, and our customers are able to enjoy smoother customs brokerage with goods passing through with greater ease."

"With our vast networks of

transportation routes, many overseas customers use Singapore as a base for their regional activities. This STP certification puts us in good stead that we are compliant with supply chain security good practices and we can offer more value to our customers with the benefits accorded by the STP status," said Mr Nick Wong, Managing Director.

Kuehne + Nagel Pte Ltd

Kuehne + Nagel is a leading global provider of innovative and fully-integrated supply chain solutions with more than 1,000 locations in over 100 countries.

"We consistently benchmark our service portfolio and practices against best-in-class standards. Our attainment of the STP certification reaffirms that the same high standards apply throughout the company," said Mr Erwin Wittemaier, Managing Director, Singapore & Malaysia.

LF Logistics Services Pte Ltd

LF Logistics is the supply chain partner of choice for companies looking to grow sustainably in Asia. With a network spanning Greater China, ASEAN, Japan, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent, LF Logistics has a strong 'home court advantage' in this culturally diverse and economically active region. The company manages 20.1 million square feet of space, partners more than 400 companies worldwide and delivers 100 million units of consumer products each day.

"LF Logistics is proud to be certified under the STP programme as it increases our employees' security awareness. Having good customs practices in daily operations will further enhance our commitment in supply chain security for our customers," said Mr Goh Oon Kim, Manager, Operations, Singapore.

Homecoming for Customs Officers

As part of the SG50 celebrations, Singapore Customs hosted a Homecoming reception for our retired Customs officers on the evening of 6 March 2015 to honour their service and contributions.

The programme started with a 10-minute video montage of photos showing Customs officers at work, dating back to the 1950s, and a snippet of *Sea Eagle*, a 1995 telemovie about Customs officers produced by the then-Television Corporation of Singapore.

Director-General Ho Chee Pong then welcomed the participants with a short opening speech before dinner commenced, paying tribute to the pioneering efforts, dedicated service and hard work by the cohorts of Customs officers that have shaped Singapore Customs into the organisation it is today.

With a lively turnout of almost 250 participants, it was a night filled with nostalgia, sense of pride and community as well as lots of catching up between friends and former colleagues. An instant photo booth provided each guest photos of the memorable evening to bring home.

The event was also graced by the presence of three former Directors-General of Customs: Mr K P Sandrasegara (Director-General from July 1985 to March 1988), Mr Koh Chong Hwa (Director-General from April 1995 to March 2003), and Mr Fong Yong Kian (Director-General from January 2008 to December 2013). 



It was a night filled with nostalgia, sense of pride and community as well as lots of catching up between friends and former colleagues.



From left: Director-General Ho Chee Pong, and former Directors-General Koh Chong Hwa, K P Sandrasegara, and Fong Yong Kian.

TRAINING CALENDAR

Please note that dates are subject to change. For full programme and registration details, please refer to www.customsacademy.gov.sg

PROGRAMME	
<p>SC100 BASICS OF EVERY DECLARANT</p> <p>This three-day course provides trade declarants with 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.</p> <p>The course comprises three modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC101 Customs Procedures (2 days) • SC102 Classification and the Harmonised System (half-day) • SC103 Rules of Origin / Free Trade Agreements (half-day) <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>13-15 July 2015 4-6 August 2015 14-16 September 2015</p>
<p>SC200 STRATEGIC GOODS CONTROL PROGRAMME</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The seminar comprises two modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC201 Basics of Strategic Goods Control (half-day) • SC202 Essentials of Internal (Export Control) Compliance Programme (half-day) <p>Participants may register for individual modules.</p>	<p>20 August 2015</p>
<p>SC400 CUSTOMS COMPETENCY TEST FOR DECLARANTS</p> <p>This module is designed to test an individual's knowledge of the customs procedures and documentation requirements. Upon passing this test, the individual can then apply for registration with Singapore Customs as a declarant to submit TradeNet permit declarations.</p> <p>This is an open-book test comprising 50 multiple-choice questions. The topics tested include: customs procedures, TradeNet declarations, valuation, classification, Rules of Origin and specialised procedures. The one-hour test can be taken during the AM or PM session.</p> <p>Individuals who wish to sit for the test are advised to familiarise themselves with above-listed subject areas. They can do so through courses or eLearning at Singapore Customs Academy, the Customs Virtual Academy and by visiting the Customs website.</p>	<p>16 July 2015 31 July 2015</p> <p>AM and PM sessions available</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED TRADERS</p> <p>This quarterly programme is designed to equip new traders with a better understanding of customs documentation procedures, as well as the various customs schemes and services available.</p> <p>For enquiries, please email customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg</p>	<p>29 September 2015</p>
<p>OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR NEWLY-REGISTERED MANUFACTURERS</p> <p>This bimonthly 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 procedures for certificates of origin, and the compliance requirements.</p> <p>For enquiries, please email customs_roo@customs.gov.sg</p>	<p>31 July 2015 9 September 2015</p>
<p>TRADERS CLINICS</p> <p>These one-to-one consultation sessions are an avenue for traders to seek general advice on general customs procedures and services. If you are interested, write in to customs_documentation@customs.gov.sg for an appointment. Sessions are subject to availability.</p>	



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

We Make Trade Easy, Fair & Secure

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