



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 KASTAM SINGAPURA சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

## MEDIA RELEASE

24 June 2022

### **Singaporean man jailed and fined over \$4 million for fraudulently evading GST and falsifying documents on 632 occasions**

Ho Shyan Tien (何贤天), a 44-year-old Singaporean, was sentenced by the State Courts on 23 June 2022 to eight months' imprisonment and a fine of \$4,419,000 for fraudulently evading Goods and Services Tax (GST) on the imports of miscellaneous goods and falsifying documents between 2015 and 2019.

Ho, the sole director of a freight forwarding company, Sea-Net Cargo Express (S) Pte Ltd (Sea-Net) pleaded guilty to six charges while another six charges were taken into consideration during the sentencing.

#### Facts of the Case

In June 2019, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) conducted a check on the GST return submission made by one of Ho's customers, who is an importer and found discrepancies in the Cargo Clearance Permits (CCP)<sup>1</sup>. IRAS then sought Singapore Customs' assistance to verify the GST amount paid by the importer. It was found that the GST amounts stated in the importer's copy of the CCP were higher than what was in Singapore Customs' records. Further verification with the importer showed that the importer had paid the GST amounts reflected in their copy of the CCP.

Arising from the verification with IRAS and the importer, Singapore Customs commenced investigations into Sea-Net. Investigations established that Ho masked the original values in the commercial invoices from his customers by pasting altered values over them. Ho then photocopied the falsified commercial invoices and provided

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<sup>1</sup> A Cargo Clearance Permit (CCP) is required to account for the import and tax payment of the goods. Before the actual importation, an importer is required to obtain a CCP. To obtain a CCP, a declaration is required to be made to Singapore Customs electronically and the GST payable would then be paid to the State.

them to a declaring agent for the purpose of applying for a CCP. There were also occasions where Ho received commercial invoices from customers in an editable document, which allowed him to amend the values directly. The declaring agent would pay Customs the GST payable based on the documents it received from Sea-Net, and bill Sea-Net the GST paid to Customs accordingly. The declaring agent would then send the CCP to Sea-Net once the CCP was approved. Ho's actions resulted in the under-declaration of the values of the goods and under-payment of GST to Singapore Customs.

To conceal his scheme, Ho altered the values and GST amounts stated in the approved CCPs and provided the altered CCPs to his customers. This gave his customers the impression that the correct GST amounts were paid to Singapore Customs. Ho would thereby profit from the difference between the GST amount collected from his customers and the lower GST amount paid to the State through the declaring agent.

Ho committed these acts on 632 occasions by providing false values of goods imported by his customers between 2015 and 2019 to the declaring agent. The total amount of GST evaded amounted to \$1,252,100.18.

Ho pleaded guilty to three charges of fraudulent evasion of GST involving 327 falsified invoices totaling \$744,969.34 in GST evaded and three charges for falsifying documents involving 328 CCPs. Another three charges of fraudulent evasion of GST involving 304 falsified invoices totaling \$507,130.84 in GST evaded and the three corresponding charges of falsifying documents involving 304 CCPs were taken into consideration during sentencing.

Importers are advised to conduct checks on declarations to Singapore Customs made on their behalf by their freight forwarders or declaring agents using their Unique Entity Number (UEN). To safeguard themselves against frauds, traders may wish to sign up for the Trader Notification Service to receive notifications relating to permit declarations made using their UEN. The notifications include information on the total amount of duty and/or GST payable.

Any person who is in any way concerned in any fraudulent evasion of, or attempt to fraudulently evade, any duty shall be guilty of an offence and will be liable on conviction to a fine of up to 20 times the amount of duty and GST evaded. Falsifying documents are serious offences. Offenders can be fined up to \$10,000 and/or jailed up to 12 months.

Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-233-0000 or email [customs\\_intelligence@customs.gov.sg](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg) to report these illegal activities.

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**Singapore Customs**

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