



IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

A Christmas Carol Dedicated to the Smugglers

< Sing to the tune of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" >

**Oh! You better watch out,
You better not try,
You better not hide,
I'm telling you why:**

ICA and Customs are checking you down!

**We're collaborating,
As ever before,
Gonna find out who's genuine or not,
ICA and Customs are checking you down!**

And we hope that was a clear enough message, *or rather carol*, to the smugglers out there, because apart from working hand in hand with Singapore Customs (SC) to thwart the illegal attempts, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers also use their trained eyes, *or noses in this case*, to outwit these bootleggers. Yes, we are that sharp, so do not, and we repeat, do not try to hoodwink us, because the enforcement agencies will pull out all the stops to foil the smuggling bids.

2 On 17 December 2010, at 9.55am, ICA officers conducted routine checks on a Malaysia-registered car that was driven by a male Malaysian Chinese. In the course of checks, the eagle-eyed officers observed that something was amiss with the fuel tank and proceeded to check out the floorboard of the vehicle. True to their trained instincts, the officers found a loose bolt. Upon unfastening it, they caught a whiff of something intoxicating.



From left: The loose bolt that gave the game away; Top view of the modified fuel tank

3 Through the use of their experience in vehicle checks, their keen observation skills, and not forgetting the use of their sense of smell, the officers uncovered the “modified” fuel tank which contained approximately 53 litres of duty-unpaid whisky. The potential Customs duty and GST involved in the duty-unpaid liquor amounted to about \$1,600 and \$90 respectively.

4 When questioned, the Malaysian driver, Wang, admitted knowledge of the loot found in the vehicle and claimed that the liquid is whisky. The 25-year-old Chinese elaborated that he was instructed by a male Malaysian Chinese by the name of “Ah Kang” to collect the said car parked at City Square, Johor Bahru. He was to proceed to Woodlands Town Centre after entering Singapore successfully. Thereafter, somebody would take over the conveyance and Wang would be paid RM200 for the job. The case was then handed over to Customs for their follow-up investigations.

5 Further investigations by Singapore Customs revealed that Wang was lured by the attractive commission offered by the syndicate as a delivery man. Customs officers also conducted an examination of the “modified” fuel tank and found a metallic box which fitted snugly inside the 80-litre fuel tank, with a thin layer of car petrol in-between the box and the tank. The duty-unpaid liquor was *cleverly* stored in the box to avoid detection by the authorities!



Modifications made to the fuel tank

6 However, Wang’s smuggling attempt, though meticulously planned and carried out, could not escape the long arm of the law. He was charged in court on 18 December 2010 and sentenced to fines totaling \$18,000, or in default 12 weeks’ imprisonment on 20 December 2010. The liquor has been forfeited by the Court while court proceedings for the forfeiture of the vehicle are still ongoing.

7 For importation of uncustomed goods, upon conviction by the Court, first-time offenders can be fined up to 20 times the amount of duty and GST 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 vehicle used in conveying the contraband will also be liable for forfeiture.

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, cargoes and conveyances at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands.

ISSUED BY: IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY 移民与关卡局

**SINGAPORE CUSTOMS
KASTAM SINGAPURA**

新加坡关税局
சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

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