



News Release

RCMP Seize Large Quantity of Shisha Tobacco

(London, Ontario – Friday, April 23rd, 2010) - On Friday, April 16th, 2010, the London/Sarnia Customs & Excise Sections of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) with the assistance from the Ontario Ministry of Revenue and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) executed a Search Warrant at a business located in Mississauga, Ontario. Officers seized approximately 7 tonnes of Egyptian Shisha Tobacco, under the brand name of “Maasoul”. This represents what is known to be the largest seizure of this product in Canada.

Shisha is a product that is a mix of molasses and fruit flavors, which is laced with tobacco, and is smoked in a Hookah (water pipe). Many people are misled in believing that hookah smoking is safer than cigarette smoking because the tobacco smoke is filtered through water before it is actually smoked, which is not the case. Hookah tobacco and smoke contain nicotine and many of the same cancer-causing agents found in other tobacco products. The product seized is not labeled as containing tobacco nor does it display health warnings.

It is an offence in Canada to possess tobacco products not properly stamped under the Excise Act, 2001. If convicted of possessing, buying or selling contraband tobacco products this seizure could be subject to fines or penalties ranging from \$70,000 to \$1,000,000 and/or imprisonment for up to five years. This excludes provincial fines, which can be many times higher.

“We continue to be diligent with these investigations to increase public safety and protect the interests of the Canadian economy and taxpayers,” stated Inspector Dwight Blok, Officer in Charge of the RCMP London/Sarnia Regional Detachment.

Anyone with information regarding the sale and manufacturing of contraband tobacco is asked to contact the RCMP at 1-800-387-0020 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

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