



The Official Newsletter of the Philippine Bureau of Customs

PORT SENTINEL

Volume 9

Issue No. 55

June 2017

There is no 'inside job' in warehouse fire - BOC



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) dispelled speculations that the fire which razed Security Warehouse 159 on June 1 could have been an inside job.

Sonny Sarmiento, deputy chairman for operations of the BOC – Special Studies and Project Development Committee (SSPDC), said the keys to the warehouse were kept by four different personnel from Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service, Enforcement and Security Services, SSPDC and a warehouseman designated by the Port of Manila.

“Unauthorized personnel cannot enter Warehouse 159. It can be accessed once the four agents are all present, so we already rejected the possibility of an inside job and sabotage,” said Sarmiento as he dismissed claims of a possible sabotage.

CCTV footages showed BOC agents facilitated the transfer of goods to the warehouse at 5 p.m. before the fire broke out. This, the BOC said, validated the agents’

.....
see **THERE IS NO** ▶ page 6

Importer, broker faces smuggling raps

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) on June 6 filed two separate cases of smuggling against several importers and customs brokers before the Department of Justice.

In the first case, the Bureau’s Action Team Against Smugglers (BATAS) charged executives of Moving Forward Global Trading, namely, Liezl Romero Catingan, Maria Josiegen Arcilla, Jonaliza Pedarce Gabutan, Werren Trespeces, Denes Negro Camay, Amador Visitacion Villalon, with office address at 38 North Rd., Cortes Compound Basak in Mandaue City, Cebu; customs broker Romer Gastador; and other co-conspirators.

BATAS said they violated the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act of 2016; DENR Administrative Order (AO) No. 1994-28, or the “Interim Guidelines in the Importation of Recyclable Materials Containing Hazardous Substances; and the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

The questioned shipment originated from Korea and arrived on board the MV Cristina at the Port of Cebu on January 2, 2017. It was declared to contain 2,500 metric tons of wood chips and 2,500 metric tons of recycled synthetic resins.

Upon inspection by customs officials, however, the containers were packed with plastic heterogenous materials estimated to be worth P4.87 million.

The DENR’s AO prohibits the importation of such hazardous materials.

In another case, BATAS filed smuggling charges against Silver Crown Centennial Marketing Company, its owners, broker, and other co-conspirators who were involved in the illegal shipment of truck components.

The shipment from Korea, which arrived on board MV San Aurelio on February 9, 2015 at the Port of Davao, was declared as “used replacement parts for light trucks.”

However, X-ray inspection revealed various truck components and used tires and engines without the required Certificate of Authority to Import from the Bureau of Import Services.

The importers and brokers were charged with violation of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, Department of Trade and Industry Administrative Order No. 8 series of 2003, or the Guidelines for the Mandatory Accreditation of Bus/Truck Rebuilding Centers, Letter of Instruction No. 1086 which prohibits the importation of used tires, and Article 172 of the revised Penal Code.

BOC relieves employee for bribery

The Bureau of Customs – Port of Davao has temporarily relieved an employee accused of involvement in an anomalous transaction that was caught on CCTV and which has gone viral on the internet on June 23.

An amateur video showing an employee supposedly collecting a bribe went viral on social media. The employee is assigned at the BOC – Port of Davao.

Lawyer Erastus Sandino B. Austria, district collector of the Port of Davao, immediately summoned the employee, along with his immediate superior, to give their side and shed light on the incident. They were also instructed to submit a written explanation within 24 hours.

Austria said the employee from the Port Operations Division has been temporarily relieved until the investigation is completed.

The BOC urged the complainant to submit a detailed narration of what really transpired to help it determine the facts for use in the ongoing investigation.

A fact-finding committee composed of the Chief of the Administration Division, Chief of the CIIS (Customs Intelligence) and District Commander of ESS-CPD (Customs Police) was also created to find out what really transpired in the said video. The committee was ordered to submit its report within 72 hours.

A memorandum was also issued asking the Director of the CIIS Investigation Division to conduct an impartial investigation on the matter.

Austria assured the public that he would not tolerate corruption and that strict adherence to government ethical standards will be strictly followed in his port.



6,000 bags of seized onions destroyed by Customs-Davao

Davao City – The Bureau of Customs-Port of Davao has destroyed P400, 000 worth of misdeclared bags of onions on June 22 in Tagum City, Davao del Norte.

Bags of yellow and red onions were crushed and disposed of at the facility of Malfer Enterprises – the accredited service provider for the render and disposal of perishable and non-perishable condemned cargoes.

The onions were part of a shipment from China that was confiscated in August 2016 after BOC-Davao found 885 bags of yellow onion and 5,313 bags of red onion were misdeclared by Equicent Import and Export Corporation.

The misdeclaration is a violation of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, as amended, and Department of Agriculture’s Administrative Order No. 9 Series of 2010 (Rules and Regulations on the Importation of Agricultural and Fish and Fishery/Aquatic Products, Fertilizers,

Pesticides and Other Agricultural Chemicals, Veterinary, Drugs, Biological Products into the Philippines).

Lawyer Erastus Austria, the district collector, said Equicent wrote a letter to OIC District Collector Jamail A. Marohomsalic about its intent to abandon the shipment.

“The condemnation was consummated without any expense on the part of the Bureau,” Austria said.

The disposal of the seized goods was led by the current District Collector Atty. Erastus Sandino B. Austria; Deputy Collector, Atty. Dante A. Maranan; Auction and Cargo Disposal Committee Head, Ms. Rechilda T. Oquias.

They were joined by representatives from the Commission on Audit, Department of Agriculture Bureau of Plant Industries–National Plant Quarantine Services Division, and Malfer Enterprises.

BOC to consider temporary reactivation of suspended importers

Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon on June 30 issued a memorandum providing the guidelines for the temporary lifting of suspension, cancellation, and revocation of the customs accreditation privileges of importers with seized and/or forfeited shipments.

Importers may file their requests before the Office of the Commissioner.

The issuance of the directive is part of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) commitment to facilitate trade in a more efficient manner.

The Bureau also wanted to ensure that despite the continuing suspension or revocation of erring importers’

accreditation, port congestion would be avoided.

Concerned importers may now submit a letter asking for the temporary lifting of such suspension, cancellation or revocation in order to immediately accommodate the processing of shipments arrived prior to or on the date of suspension, cancellation, and revocation of their accreditation privileges.

The letter-request must contain the following information:

- Consignee’s name, address and contact number;
- Bill of Lading number/s (only those provided will be processed);

- List and the description of the pending shipments;

- Port of Destination of the subject shipments; and

- A statement that a motion or letter for reconsideration to permanently lift such suspension, cancellation or revocation has been filed with the AMO.

Concerned importers whose shipments are still in transit at the time of the suspension, cancellation or revocation are advised to submit their letter requests after the said shipment/s have arrived at the port of destination.

The memorandum further states: “The temporary lifting of the suspension,

cancellation or revocation, if approved, shall last 10 working days from the reactivation of the importer’s account.”

Requests will be processed in one to two working (2) days from the receipt of the importer’s letter. The AMO will send an e-mail to the importer concerned once the latter’s account has been reactivated.

Request for the temporary lifting of the suspension, cancellation or revocation may only be submitted once.

On the other hand, subsequent requests from the same importer shall no longer be entertained by the Office of the Commissioner.

BOC, China start talks on enhanced anti-smuggling operation

Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon and members of the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of China Customs informally start talks on the two countries’ initiatives and countermeasures against illicit trade on June 20 at the Bureau of Customs.

Quan Li, Chief of the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of Xiamen Customs, led the courtesy call to the Office of the Commissioner together with Xiang Yang Di, deputy director of the First Investigation; Xenchu Xu, head of the Third Section of Anti-Smuggling Bureau of Xiamen, Gaoqi Airport Customs; Xhixing Wang and Lingzhi Peng, members of Xiamen Customs’ Anti-Smuggling Bureau.

The delegation from the China Customs, in their meeting with

Commissioner Faeldon, expressed confidence that the customs officials of both countries will double their efforts towards a more effective information sharing and intelligence work focused on anti-smuggling operations.

During the discussion, the customs officials of both countries exchanged inputs on how to strengthen and improve communication strategies to put a stop to international illicit trade.

Faeldon told the delegation that Philippine customs continues to be on guard against smuggling and that international cooperation is significant in this campaign.

Faeldon adds, “This renewed commitment of both China and Philippine customs to fight smuggling is a strong signal and warning to smugglers to rethink and stop their illegal trade.”





QUICK FACTS: BALIKBAYAN BOX

Kailangan ba ang resibo kung used items ang laman ng balikbayan box?



HINDI kailangan ang resibo para sa mga used o second-hand items, regalo, o mga items na nabili sa garage sale. Kailangan lang ay isulat pa din sa Information Sheet ang approximate value ng mga items.

Kailan ba dapat mag-submit ng resibo o invoice kung magpapadala ng balikbayan box?

Ang mga resibo o invoice ay kailangan lang para sa mga high-valued brand new items na higit sa P10k ang halaga.



boc.cares@customs.gov.ph
Bureau of CustomsPH
@CustomsPH

For questions and clarifications, contact the Bureau of Customs at (02) 705-6000 / (02) 705-6052
A joint project Project Management Office and Public Information and Assistance Division.



boc.cares@customs.gov.ph
Bureau of CustomsPH
@CustomsPH

For questions and clarifications, contact the Bureau of Customs at (02) 705-6000 / (02) 705-6052
A joint project Project Management Office and Public Information and Assistance Division.



Kailangan ba mag-submit ng kopya ng passport sa tuwing magpapadala ng balikbayan box?

Hindi. Ang photocopy lang ng passport ay required para sa mga gustong mag-avail ng duty and tax exemption privilege. Ito ay magsisilbing proof of Filipino citizenship.

(Ang photocopy ng biographical page ng passport lamang ang kailangan.)



Kailan ang mandatory submission ng Information Sheet?

Simula August 1, kailangan siguraduhin ng mga forwarders na may Information Sheet na isa-submit sa kanila ang lahat ng magpapadala ng balikbayan box. I download mula sa <http://customs.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Balikbayan-Information-Sheet.pdf> ang Information Sheet o humingi sa inyong mga consolidators o forwarders.

boc.cares@customs.gov.ph
Bureau of CustomsPH
@CustomsPH

For questions and clarifications, contact the Bureau of Customs at (02) 705-6000 / (02) 705-6052
A joint project Project Management Office and Public Information and Assistance Division.



boc.cares@customs.gov.ph
Bureau of CustomsPH
@CustomsPH

For questions and clarifications, contact the Bureau of Customs at (02) 705-6000 / (02) 705-6052
A joint project Project Management Office and Public Information and Assistance Division.



BOC assures stricter border security

Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon has ordered heads of all 17 ports under the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to conduct an investigation on the seven kilos of drugs that were found in Las Pinas warehouse.

While the drugs might have entered the country through the ports of Zamboanga and Cebu, evidence has yet to show that these indeed passed through the said seaports.

Faeldon said the BOC would

closely coordinate with the Philippine National Police - Drug Enforcement Group to deepen its investigation into the matter in order to establish whether the suspects were into trading business or importation of goods.

BOC agents have long been closely guarding the ports and on the lookout for any questionable activities.

The stricter border enforcement has resulted in the confiscation of a

fishing vessel in Subic in July 2016 where a hydrogenator, which is used in the manufacture of illegal drugs, was found.

In February 2017, agents seized P3 million worth of hydrochloric acid in the port of Cagayan de Oro. The chemical is used in drugs manufacturing.

Last month, a shipment with P600,000 worth of controlled chemicals which is also used in the production of illegal drugs was

seized in Aparri.

The BOC currently uses available though limited resources to ensure that all shipments coming into the country are legitimate and do not conceal any prohibited items.

The commissioner said that upgrading the BOC facilities has remained among the bureau's top priorities. Currently, the bureau is procuring additional x-ray machines and speedboats to improve its capability in guarding the ports.



PCSO donates ambulance to BOC

The Bureau of Customs on June 21 received a brand new ambulance unit donated by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon thanked the PCSO for the prompt response in the bureau's call for support in medical facilities.

He also said that the bureau can now rely on its own logistical equipment to meet medical emergencies.

"The ambulance is now under Medical and Dental Division and will now serve the needs of the employees, stakeholders, and the neighbouring barangays," he said.

Present during the turnover ceremony were PCSO General

Manager Alexander Balutan and Executive Assistant Maj. Manuel Fragonal who personally went to the Bureau and delivered the ambulance.

The Medical and Dental Division chief, Dr. Manuel Jacinto, disclosed the bureau is planning to request more ambulances.

"Commissioner plans to put one ambulance for each port so we can respond immediately to health and other humanitarian emergencies," Dr. Jacinto said.

The donation comes in timely as the BOC has been conducting public events that may need the services of an ambulance.



Customs-Clark seizes gaming cards

A shipment containing gaming cards with a total tax of P420,000 was seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) -Port of Clark on June 27 for lack of import permit.

Reports reaching the BOC main office said the shipment, weighing 1,876 kilos, was composed of 121 packages of gaming cards with each box containing 144 playing card decks.

The shipment was consigned to Eaglesky Technology Amusement, Inc., a private company which provides research and development on computer gaming integrated chip.

Melchor Rabo, officer-in-charge of BOC-UPS Composite Unit, said the shipment arrived on June 7 from

Taiwan via UPS Flight No. 5X0138. Being a restricted importation under Section 3.23 of CAO 3-2017 and Sec. 119 (b) of the CMTA, it requires an Import Permit from Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) which the claimant failed to secure.

District Collector Maritess T. Martin issued the Warrant of Seizure and Detention S.I. No. 004-2017 on June 23 to the Customs Police Division to be served on the importer.

The shipment, now in the custody of the port, is expected to undergo seizure and forfeiture proceedings in coordination with the BOC Legal Service.



MICP-BOCEA checks employee health status



Manila International Container Port –Bureau of Customs Employees Association (MICP-BOCEA) spearheaded an Executive Check-up for all employees of the bureau.

In partnership with Alviar Medical Laboratories Inc., lawyer

Vincent Philip Maronilla, MICP district collector said the activity aims to “know the health status of the employees and give the necessary medications/prescription, if needed.”

One hundred twenty employees

joined the said activity.

“The Executive check-up was very helpful. We are informed about our health condition and made us more conscious about the food we intake,” said one MICP employee.

Atty. Maronilla said that MICP believes in the saying “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

This is the first executive check-up we have done and definitely will not be the last, assured the collector.

BOC awards top performing divisions

The Manila International Container Port awarded Certificate of Commendation to employees who surpassed the section/division target revenue collection from January to July 2017 during the Flag Ceremony held last 10 July 2017.

The divisions/sections that received commendations are the following:

- Special Warehousing Assessment Unit headed by Mr. Darwin P. Castro (June 1-30, 2017)
- Common Bonded Warehouse Division headed by Mr. Nelson J. Salvanera (June 1-30, 2017)
- Section 11, Formal Entry Division headed by Ms. Matilda G. Bacongan

(June 1-30, 2017)

- Section 10, Formal Entry Division headed by Mr. Harold S. Agama (January-June 2017)
- Section 9, Formal Entry Division headed by Ms. Vicenta S. Gui (January-June 2017)
- Section 8, Formal Entry Division headed by Mr. Raymond N. Linsangan (January-June 2017)
- Section 5, Formal Entry Division headed by Mr. Juan Jose Q. San Andres (January-June 2017)
- Section 1-B, Formal Entry Division headed by Ms. Ma. Teresa R. Aggabao (January-June 2017)



MICP preps employees in CSE 2017

The Manila International Container Port (MICP) –Bureau of Customs Employees Association (BOCEA) conducts review classes to employees of the bureau in preparation for the upcoming Civil Service Examination (CSE) 2017 for Professional and Sub-professional.

The review, starting on June 2 until August 4, 2017, aims to help the employees acquire civil

service eligibility to be qualified for promotion. Most positions in the government require Civil Service eligibility.

“Some of these employees have been with the bureau for more than five years now; this is one way of uplifting the morale of the employees,” said lawyer Vincent Philip Maronilla, district collector of MICP.



THERE IS NO

report and residents' claims that 'several men' were inside the warehouse at that time.

According to the agents' report, the warehouse was padlocked at 6:30 p.m. after the unloading of the articles, three hours before the fire erupted.

Among the articles damaged by the fire were used clothing, counterfeit shoes, refrigerators, plywood, toys, cigarettes, soaps, non-serviceable cars, and other chemicals, all subject

for destruction and condemnation.

Based on circumstances reported, the initial BOC findings indicated that the fire was caused by faulty electrical wiring.

"We are eyeing the possibility that the fire was triggered by faulty electrical wiring or the chemicals stored inside the warehouse," Sarmiento said.

"However, those were just probabilities. We are not making

any conclusion because we are still awaiting the result of the ongoing investigation by the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP)," he stressed.

Oscar Villalva, Auction and Cargo Disposal Division chief of Port of Manila, refuted the claim of BFP officials that the BOC failed to coordinate with them on the ongoing investigation.

"Immediately after the incident, we gave an initial copy of the inventory

and during the investigation. What we endorsed yesterday was the official transmittal of the list of inventory with the proper endorsement," Villalva said.

"We are very much willing to cooperate and coordinate with the BFP to facilitate the investigation and to know what really caused the fire," Villalva said.

As of June 9, customs authorities have yet to assess the cost of damage.

BOC Davao extends double-digit collection growth streak

The Port of Davao extends yet again, for the 8th straight month, its double-digit revenue growth streak, after posting a 125.79% collection for the month of June, up by 47.2% compared to the Port's recorded collection from the same period in 2016.

While the port has constantly recorded commendable performance in terms of collection for the last three years, the 25.79% increase against assigned target in June, marks an unprecedented 8th month feat of double-digit increase from earmarked collection and a whole year of consistent revenue growth under the Duterte administration.

The port collected a daily average of more than P73.06 million, which is equivalent to 126% of its average daily target of P58.10 million. With six more months to go, the Port has already collected 57.6% of its assigned target.

The main port in Davao collected more than P1.36 billion, up by 35.1% versus its target. The sub-port of Dadiangas also registered surplus collection, exceeding their individual targets by 24.74% while

the sub-port of Mati's collection is already consolidated in the main ports' collection.

At the back of a robust Philippine economy driven by increased investor confidence to the country and the stewardship of Commissioner Nicanor E. Faeldon, District Collector Atty. Erastus Sandino B. Austria attribute the port's continued remarkable performance to the camaraderie and hardwork of BOC Davao employees.

According to Atty. Austria, "the Port of Davao will continue to work hard in performing its mandate to provide quality public service and deliver meaningful change in the service of the Filipino and for the welfare of the nation."

While the port faces various challenges including the lack of personnel, "it is our firm resolve here at the Port of Davao to make Collection District XII – Davao City being the hometown or as political observers put it "the exhibit A" of the President, a model for other Collection Districts all over the country," Atty. Austria said.



The Port of Clark headed by District Collector Maritess T. Martin received three Plaques of Recognition during the Collectors' Conference held last June 21 for exceeding their collection target from January to June.

Port of Clark posted a 11.7% positive deviation for the first half of 2017.

From January to June this year, the port recorded a total actual collection of P707.2 million against the total target of P633 million.

As compared to the actual collection on the previous year of the same period, collection has increased by 0.9% to last year's total collection of P701.2 million.

Among the top importers and

exporters that contributed to the successful collection performance were United Parcel Service, Viskase Asia Pacific Corp., Phoenix Semiconductors Phils. Inc., Nanox Phils. Inc., Yokohama Tire Phils. and SMK Electronic Phils. Corp.

"The port is still focused on beating its collection target for 2017 after the successive feat in the past six months," said Collector Martin.

The port is also gearing for a more effective performance this year through its stricter anti-smuggling operations, regular seminar and training of personnel, enhancement of trade facilitation procedures, and continuous socio-economic and outreach activities.



Editor-in-Chief:
Maria Gerty D. Pagaran

Associate Editor:
Mary Joy T. Lopez

Editorial Staff:
Karren April A. Noronio, Writer
Jessil Garlando

Photographers:
Jerome L. Monta
Mark Kevin Pilar

Contributors:
Raiza Dapilin, Writer
Moris Almojuela, Writer
Marife Foloso, Writer

PORT SENTINEL welcomes your feedback. Kindly e-mail to piad@customs.gov.ph

BOC-Clark participates Industry Awareness Seminar



Aiming to update bureau personnel with relevant information about Philippine industries and existing laws on standards, the Philippine Association of Black Iron and Galvanized Iron (BI-GI) Pipes and Tubes Manufacturers, Inc. facilitated an Industry Awareness Seminar last July 20 at the port's Conference Room.

The seminar intends to provide significant information on Philippines industries particularly the steel industry.

The seminar emphasized the role of customs in identifying substandard and standard steel pipes, use of proper description

of goods, correct determination of Harmonized System (HS) code and its role in preventing technical smuggling of such goods.

Also highlighted are the rules and regulations defining the responsibilities and liabilities of manufacturers and importers with regards to the mandatory product certifications and markings needed to meet the requisites of Philippine National Standards.

"All information acquired in the activity will greatly benefit our personnel and will surely aid in the conduct of their duties and functions in the bureau," District Collector Maritess Martin said.

Billions worth of fake products seized by BOC

Billions of pesos worth of counterfeit products were seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) from a concealed manufacturing plant in Guiguinto, Bulacan on June 17.

Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon led agents of the BOC-Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) in inspecting the warehouses inside the Richard Isagani Sandy (RIS) 5 Industrial Complex owned by certain William, Isagani, and Sandy (last name unknown) located in Tabe, Guiguinto.

Found inside the warehouse

were various kinds of locally manufactured counterfeit products that included manufacturing machines/equipments.

Retired Colonel Neil Estrella, CIIS director said the machines might be legally imported but eventually found being used for illegal activities.

Counterfeit goods are classified as prohibited under the Republic Act No. 8293 or the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Personalities involved are being investigated by the agents of the BOC.



BOC Davao, partners donate aid for AFP soldiers

The BOC Port of Davao in cooperation with various government and non-government organizations collectively donated aid for the brave soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines defending Marawi.

On June 30, 2017, the Port of Davao led by District Collector Atty. Erastus Sandino B. Austria, turned over the donations to Lt. Col. Ronaldo Valdez, commanding officer of the 10th Civil Military Operations Battalion of the Philippine Army, in Naval Station Felix Apolinario, Panacan, Davao City.

The aid came from personal cash donations of Port of Davao employees and stakeholders.

The port also helped in the packing and transportation of the donated goods to the conflict zone.

The items were packed into kits, which included food, hygienic and

comfort goods, and other "lifestraw" items for the personal needs of valiant men-in-uniform in the battlefield.

Several BOC staff had also volunteered to join and lend a hand in the distribution of the packages.

This initiative is in participation of the Support Our Troops campaign launched by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The campaign was launched to boost the morale of soldiers and give ordinary Filipino citizens a chance to contribute in the effort to end the crisis in Marawi.

Through this project, BOC Davao and its partners, convey their appreciation and support to all Filipino soldiers risking their lives in the battlefield in order to finally liberate the embattled city.



119TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

June 12, 2017, Rizal Park

