



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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Cigarette Tax Enforcement Rises To a New Level

Attorney General Earl I. Anzai announced today that as part of a joint initiative with U. S. Customs, the Department of the Attorney General's on-going Cigarette Tax Stamp Enforcement efforts has risen to a new level. Two arrests were made today by Special Investigators of the Attorney Generals Office working in conjunction with U. S. Customs:

- An adult female who hand carried 30 cartons of un-stamped cigarettes on a flight that came to Hawaii from Tonga was arrested by Special Investigators of the Attorney Generals Office for violating Hawaii's Cigarette Tax Stamp law.
- An adult male was arrested on similar charges for possessing and transporting 36 cartons of un-stamped cigarettes into the State from Vietnam.

Anzai noted that enforcement efforts began with an emphasis on commercial establishments. Now enforcement efforts have been expanded to individuals who break the law. Beginning April 1, 2001, a person faces a Class C felony if the person, does not hold a license as a tobacco wholesaler or dealer, and knowingly possesses, keeps, stores, acquires, or transports three thousand or more cigarettes (15 or more cartons) that do not have the State of Hawaii's cigarette tax stamp affixed to the bottom of each pack of cigarettes. A person convicted of these charges faces a prison term of up to five years and a fine of \$10,000.

Anzai predicts that with the cooperation of U. S. Customs many more arrests will be made. Anyone having information regarding possible violations of the Cigarette Tax Stamping law should contact the Department of the Attorney General Investigations Division at 586-1240 or Crime Stoppers at 955-8300.
