

## Multiple contraband products seized by AGLC investigators

January 19, 2016

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More than 306 kilograms of contraband shisha tobacco, contraband cigarettes, and flavoured cigars were seized by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC). The total potential lost tax revenue is estimated to be more than \$116,000.

The contraband products were found as a result of a search warrant in Edmonton at Alex's Convenience Store in January. Hiwot Atnafu and Alemayehu (Alex) Girma have been charged with several violations, including Criminal Code charges for fraud over \$5,000, trafficking in contraband tobacco as well as charges under the provincial *Tobacco Tax Act* for possession of more than 1,000 grams of tobacco. Both are scheduled to appear in Edmonton Provincial Court on March 16, 2016.

### Contraband tobacco:

- is any tobacco product that does not comply with federal and provincial laws related to importation, marking, manufacturing, stamping and payment of duties and taxes;
- comes from four main sources: illegal manufacturers, counterfeits, tax-exempt diversions, and resale of stolen legal tobacco; and
- can be recognized by the absence of a red (Alberta) or peach/light tan (Canada) stamp bearing the "DUTY PAID CANADA DROIT ACQUITTE" on packages of cigarettes and cigars or pouches of tobacco.

All wholesalers and importers of tobacco into Alberta must be licensed to sell or import tobacco for resale. In addition, all tobacco products must be labelled according to federal and provincial regulations.

Albertans who suspect illegal tobacco production, packaging and/or trafficking, are encouraged to contact the AGLC Tobacco Enforcement Unit at 1-800-577-2522.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding with Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, the AGLC enforces the *Tobacco Tax Act* and conducts criminal investigations of contraband smuggling. In 2014-15, provincial revenue from tobacco taxes was \$940 million.

### Multimedia

[Seized Contraband Tobacco](#)

(photo 1)

[Seized Contraband Tobacco](#)

(photo 2)

### Media inquiries

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