

Labuan duty-free shops not ready

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LABUAN: Shops that applied for the Customs Kedai Bebas Cukai (Duty-free Shop) licence to enable them to continue being engaged in the sale of duty-free cigarettes, liquor and beer, have not been successful in obtaining approval.

An observation of the premises operated by the applicants showed that the applicants had failed to meet the main requirements needed before a licence could be issued.

The three main requirements are:

1. A desk at the premises for a Customs official to be stationed to monitor the daily sales of the items.
2. A computer
3. Internet connection

Failure to comply with these requirement will result in the application for licence not being approved.

This was stated in a circular issued by Customs officer Hj Mirani Hj Majidi who



signed on behalf of the Labuan Customs Department Director. The circular was issued to all applicants.

Labuan Chinese Chamber of Commerce (LCCC) Chairman Datuk Wong Kii Yii (pic) said it is obvious that the market is not ready for the implementation of the new system to monitor sales at the point of sale.

He suggested that under the circumstances, it was best the new rules be deferred until such time when the applicants were ready to invest in the fittings and space as required by the department.

Wong said in the meantime the department could beef up its enforcement at well-known spots on the island where contraband cargoes were loaded into small boats.

"This will cost less money for the department than basing an official in all the duty-free shops which could be about 20. This is a simple solution. We support the Government and public," said Wong.

The new Customs rules on retail sales of cigarettes, liquor and beer should have been effective from yesterday (Nov 1).

A random survey showed most of the shops were selling the items as before. Some, however, took them off their shelves for fear.