



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2007

INTRODUCTION

Established under Article 58 of the Basic Law, the Audit Commission functions independently and is accountable to the Chief Executive of the HKSAR. The Commission carries out two types of audit: regularity audits and value-for-money audits. Regularity audits are intended to provide an overall assurance of the general accuracy and propriety of the financial and accounting transactions of the government and other audited bodies. Value for money audits are intended to provide independent information, advice and assurance about the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which any bureau, department, or audited organisation has discharged its functions. As at 31 December 2007, the Commission had an establishment of 184.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

2. The Audit Commission is committed to ensuring that our operations are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner and meeting the commitments of the Clean Air Charter. To help promote environmental protection and reduce air emissions, the Audit Commission:

- adopts green housekeeping practices and energy-efficient measures; and
- carries out value for money audits on selected government activities which have a significant environmental impact and on related environmental issues, with a view to highlighting areas for improvement in the implementation of Government's environmental improvement policies.

HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES AND ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MEASURES:

3. The Audit Commission is committed to adopting green housekeeping practices and energy-efficient measures. Since 1993, a Green Manager at Directorate level has been appointed to introduce and review initiatives to improve the Commission's green housekeeping practices and energy-efficient measures. Through the years, the range of initiatives has expanded. Staff of the Audit Commission are required to follow the following green measures:

Paper saving measures

Reduction of paper and envelope consumption:

- use electronic mail and intranet for communication and dissemination of information;
- disseminate the Audit Reports on the Internet (<http://www.aud.gov.hk>);
- use PC-based faxes;
- use plain paper fax machine;
- avoid using fax leader pages;
- avoid sending original documents after they have been sent by fax;
- adopt electronic templates of letterhead, memo and forms to avoid pre-printed copies;
- use photocopiers and printers with double-sided printing function;
- print on both sides of paper;
- minimise photocopies by circulating circulars and other documents instead of issuing personal copies to officers;
- review distribution lists regularly;
- use old sets of documents for re-circulation;
- send unclassified documents without envelopes;
- reuse old envelopes and loose minute jackets/use transit envelopes if required; and
- send greeting cards in festive seasons by electronic means.

Reuse of paper:

- place “reuse green boxes” at designated locations to collect paper used on one side for reuse; and
- use blank side of used paper for drafting, photocopying and printing documents (including fax).

Recycling of paper:

- print Audit Reports using recycled paper or paper made from woodpulp derived from renewable forests; and
- place “recycle green boxes” at designated locations to collect waste paper for recycling.

Energy saving measures

- set AC temperature at 25.5°C;
- use venetian blinds to adjust room temperature when necessary;
- reduce lighting to minimum required for illumination;
- use energy-efficient fluorescent tubes;

- install occupancy sensors in the washrooms where lighting usage is not frequent;
- colour-code the individual lighting switches in multiple-switch circuits to identify lights not in use;
- switch off lights, air conditioning, computers and electrical appliances not in use;
- unplug all hand-held equipment chargers from socket outlets when not in use;
- minimise the use of personal electrical appliances such as heater, fan, lamp and kettle;
- set office equipment to energy saving mode during office hours;
- install timer adaptors to turn off office equipment after office hours;
- use computer workstations and printers with automatic energy saving function;
- turn off the monitor when leaving the office, even for a short period ;
- turn off non-essential servers at night, on Saturdays and public holidays;
- use LCD monitors instead of CRT monitors when replacement is required; and
- conduct routine checks during lunch hour and after office hours to ensure that any unnecessary lights and air-conditioners are switched off.

Publicity/education measures

- issue internal circular to regularly remind all staff on the economical use of paper and energy saving;
- display posters which remind drivers to switch off vehicle engine while waiting;
- post 'save energy' and 'save water' notices near light switches and water taps;
- place notices near photocopiers to remind staff to make photocopies using reusable paper and to collect waste paper for recycling; and
- conduct environmental seminar.

Other green measures

- enforce smoke-free work place policy in all offices;
- arrange regular cleaning of carpet;
- clean air ducts regularly with a view to maintaining good air ventilation;
- conduct regular indoor air quality checking;
- place air purifiers near photocopiers;
- switch off the engine of the departmental vehicle while waiting;
- use unleaded fuel;
- collect used printer cartridges for reuse;
- use refillable ball pens and clutch pencils;
- minimise use of products which are not environmentally friendly (e.g. correction fluid);
- repair old equipment;
- use hand-dryers in washrooms;
- reuse decorative materials in festive seasons;
- exchange diskettes within and outside of department; and
- collect used CDs for recycling.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES AND ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MEASURES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

PAPER AND ENVELOPE CONSUMPTION

4. In 2007, there was an increase of 2% in paper consumption as compared with 2006 arising from the recruitment exercises. Envelope consumption decreased by 14.21%. About 99% of the total quantity of paper used in 2007 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp.

5. In 2008, it is the Commission's target to contain the growth of paper and envelope consumption.

ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MEASURES

6. The Commission occupies an internal floor area of 1,961m² on 25th and 26th of the Immigration Tower. In 2007, the electricity consumed by normal power supply of office areas was about 213,069 kWh¹. The corresponding indirect emission was 407, 247 and 12.8 kg of SO₂, NO_x and RSP².

7. To improve energy efficiency, the Commission conducted a review on energy consumption in 2007 and identified areas where savings of energy could be made. We had introduced new energy saving measures including replacement of the T8 electronic ballast fluorescent system by a more energy efficient T5 electronic ballast fluorescent system; removing redundant tubes in the corridor areas; installing occupancy sensors in the washrooms where lighting usage was not frequent; colour-coding the individual lighting switches in multiple-switch circuits to identify unused lights; and installing timer adaptors to turn off office equipment after office hours. To increase staff awareness of energy saving, we conducted an environmental seminar in May 2007.

8. There is one departmental vehicle, using unleaded fuel in the Commission. The total mileage in 2007 was 11,063km and the unleaded fuel consumption was about 1,844 litres. The related emission was about 9.96 kg of NO_x.

9. In 2008, the Commission will make continued efforts to promote energy saving in the office premises.

¹ The electricity consumption for the office A/C system is excluded as no separate meters are available for measurement.

² The indirect emission from electricity consumption is calculated according to the formulae set out in the "Guide to Clean Air Charter Report Writing" published by EPD in January 2008.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

10. In 2007, the Audit Commission issued two value for money audit reports on environmental-related issues.

“Greening works of the Civil Engineering and Development Department” (Chapter 3 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 48 of March 2007)

11. The Government’s objective on implementing greening works is to enhance the quality of the environment through active planning, proper maintenance and preservation of vegetation. Greening works could improve the air quality because green plants would absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen by photosynthesis, and absorb gaseous contaminants. Greening works could also lower the temperature in summer, beautify the environment and enhance the quality of life. The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) is responsible for carrying out the majority of the greening works under capital works projects. The Audit Commission conducted a review of the CEDD’s administration of greening works and identified areas for improvement in administering future greening projects.

“Treatment and disposal of sewage sludge” (Chapter 8 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 48 of March 2007)

12. The Drainage Services Department (DSD) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of sewage treatment works. During the sewage treatment process, a large quantity of sludge (a mixture of water and solid waste) is produced as a by-product. Owing to its high water content, sludge is dewatered at sewage treatment works before disposal at landfills. The Environmental Protection Department is responsible for developing waste management strategies and managing waste disposal facilities, including landfills. As at August 2006, the DSD operated 70 sewage treatment works. The Audit Commission selected 12 major sewage treatment works for conducting a review. The review identified areas where improvements can be made in the treatment and disposal of sludge, and had made a number of recommendations to address the issues.

13. The Audit Commission will continue to conduct value for money audit studies on issues which have significant environmental impact.

THE WAY FORWARD

14. The Audit Commission will make continued efforts to help promote environmental protection through adopting green housekeeping practices as well as energy-efficient measures, and carrying out value for money audits on environmental issues.

FEEDBACK

15. We value very much your feedback, which would be useful for further improving our report in the coming years. If you have any comments or suggestions, please let us know by any of the following means -

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