



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2016

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 2016, the Commission had an establishment of 193.

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. Throughout the years, the range of initiatives has expanded. Staff of the Audit Commission are required to follow the green measures below:

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 machines;
- 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;
- send greeting cards in festive seasons by electronic means; and
- reduce the number of reference publications acquired from other bureaux/ departments.

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 A/C 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
- encourage staff to attend 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;
- use unleaded fuel;
- use recyclable laser printer cartridges;
- collect used printer cartridges for reuse;
- use refillable ball pens and clutch pencils;
- minimise use of products which are not environmental friendly (e.g. correction fluid);
- repair old equipment;
- use hand-dryers in washrooms;
- install timer taps in toilets;
- reuse decorative materials in festive seasons;
- exchange diskettes within and outside of department;
- collect used CDs for recycling;
- provide rubbish bins in the pantry for collecting waste plastic bottles and cans;
- use of environmental friendly sundries items, e.g. rechargeable batteries; and
- decline to accept souvenirs and gifts when attending events and functions.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES AND ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MEASURES

PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

PAPER AND ENVELOPE CONSUMPTION

4. With the concerted effort of our staff members, the paper consumption and envelope consumption in 2016 were reduced by 5.6% and 11.5% respectively when compared to 2015. About 99% of the total quantity of paper used in 2016 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp.

5. In 2017, 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 the 25th and 26th floors of the Immigration Tower. In 2016, the electricity consumed by normal power supply of office areas was about 202,704 kWh¹. The corresponding indirect emission was 387.2, 235.1 and 12.2 kg of SO₂, NO_x and RSP².

7. There is one departmental vehicle, using unleaded fuel in the Commission. The total mileage in 2016 was 10,444 km and the unleaded fuel consumption was about 1,828.7 litres. The related emission was about 9.4 kg of NO_x.

8. In 2017, 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 the Environmental Protection Department in January 2008.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

9. In 2016, the Audit Commission issued two value for money audit reports on environmental-related issues.

“Management of abandoned construction and demolition materials”

(Chapter 4 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 67 of October 2016)

10. Construction and demolition (C&D) activities give rise to abandoned C&D materials, comprising inert C&D materials which can be reused as fill materials in reclamation and site formation projects, and non-inert C&D materials which need to be disposed of. Of the total 135.61 million tonnes (Mt) of abandoned C&D materials generated from 2007 to 2014, 9.96 Mt (7%) were disposed of at landfills. They accounted for 25% of the 40.55 Mt of waste being disposed of at landfills during the period. Given that increases in the quantity of abandoned C&D materials being disposed of at landfills would have significant impacts on the serviceable lives of the landfills, it is important that effective measures are taken to reduce the generation of abandoned C&D materials and their disposal at landfills.

11. In 2016, the Audit Commission conducted a review of the Government’s efforts in managing abandoned C&D materials. The Audit Commission found areas where improvement could be made and provided a number of recommendations to address the issues.

“Sewerage systems in rural areas”

(Chapter 8 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 67 of October 2016)

12. As of April 2016, about 510,000 population in Hong Kong were residing in village houses, squatters and private housing developments not being provided with public sewerage facilities. Of the 510,000 population, 395,000 (77%) population mainly relied on septic-tank-and-soakaway (STS) systems for treating their sewage or dry-weather-flow interceptors for reducing pollution caused by untreated sewage. Unsatisfactory installation and maintenance of STS systems or the interceptors would cause pollution to the environment and potential health hazards to people in the vicinity. The Government has set out programmes for the provision of public sewerage systems for unsewered rural villages.

13. In 2016, the Audit Commission conducted a review to examine the sewerage systems in the rural areas. The Audit Commission found areas where improvements can be made by the Government and provided a number of recommendations to address the issues.

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

THE WAY FORWARD

15. 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

16. 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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