

How to Start a Waste Paper Recycling Programme in Residential Buildings

DO YOU KNOW

- It takes 17 trees and 1500 litres of oil to make one tonne of paper.
- In Hong Kong, over 12,000 tonnes of municipal solid wastes are disposed of daily, or 4.4 million tonnes a year.
- About 20% of the domestic solid waste collected is paper.
- A pilot scheme in Tuen Mun indicated that an average household throws away 1 kg of newspaper every week. That's one tree a year.
- Producing recycling paper creates 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution than producing paper from virgin fibres.

It is a very simple operation. You can do it in any way that suits your situation most. The following are some guidelines to help you formulate a plan for the implementation and running of such a programme :

A. What are the objective of a Waste Paper Recycling Programme in residential buildings?

The objectives are :

- to contribute towards an environmental cause by saving landfill space, conserving natural resources and reducing pollution; and
- to cultivate an environmental awareness among residents.

B. What specific targets do we want to achieve?

The targets are :

- to separate all recyclable paper waste from other wastes at source; and
- to dispose of the paper waste to waste dealers or paper mills for recycling.

C. What is the optimum scale of the programme?

This is flexible. It could be organised on the basis of individual buildings or a number of buildings. The greater number of households/buildings participating will, of course, make the programme more viable. So, co-operate with residents of your neighbouring buildings in these recycling programmes.

D. What organisational set up is required?

An organising committee with representatives of tenants and owners should be formed under a local organisation such as the Mutual Aid Committee, the Building Management Committee, the Owners' Corporation, the Area Committee or any neighbourhood organisation. To ensure effectiveness, the committee should not

operate as an independent body unless there is no parent organisation that it can affiliate to.

E. How to proceed?

Step 1 : Get to Know how the existing garbage collection system works.

Step 2 : Join hands with cleaning contractor or garbage collector in planning and implementing the programme as to where and when the waste paper should be collected.

Step 3 : Choose one of the following ways of collection :

- request the households to put the waste paper beside the garbage bin outside their doors;
- provide each floor with a waste paper container so that the households of respective floor can put their waste paper into the container; and
- identify a convenient spot in the buildings, say, the lobby, and set up a central collection point for households to put their waste paper.

Caution : The containers should be fire proof and they should not obstruct fire exits.

Step 4 : Pick-up arrangement should be made for waste dealers to take away waste paper on the day it is collected to avoid undesirable storage of bales of waste paper in the refuse chamber of your building.

For a detailed list of waste paper companies, please refer to the Hong Kong Telephone Co's Hong Kong Commercial/Industrial Guide on the Category of Waste Paper.

Step 5 : Publicise the programme among the tenants through display of posters at the lift lobby of each floor and distribution of leaflets to each flat.

Posters and leaflets can be obtained from the Environmental Campaign Committee Secretariat, 45/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Step 6 : Recycling co-ordinators to be appointed for each block or each floor, who can help :

- explain the programme in detail to the residents;
- ensure that the collection facilities are readily provided and properly maintained; and
- address problem areas after the programme begins.

F. Are all kind of paper recyclable?

Not all papers can be recycled. Depending on the specific requirements of certain paper mills, the following are the usual DOs and DON'Ts :

DO recycle

- Newspaper
 - Weekly magazines
 - Magazines/books with stapled/sewed binding (any coated glossy cover should be removed)
 - All stationery paper (including coloured paper, computer printouts, cards, etc)
 - Envelopes and folders (including stamps but remove adhesive flap or plastic window)
 - Leaflets from junk mails
- * Rubber bands, paper clips and staples are OK as they will be removed in the recycling process. But large metal fasteners and other contaminants should be removed.

DON'T recycle

- Magazines/books using glue for binding
 - Paper cups, paper plates, wax paper
 - Napkins, tissue, paper towel
 - Self-adhesive stickers or those with glue or tape
- * For technical advice on recyclables, call the Environmental Protection Department (Tel 2755 2750)

G. Reviews

Periodic reviews of the operation of the programme would be useful for improvements and for keeping up with the momentum.

Regular communication with the residents to keep them informed of the progress and achievements of the programme will be useful.

H. Waste Minimisation

Our primary goal should be to reduce the quantities of waste, i.e. to use less paper and to recycle what we must use. The programme will therefore be much more meaningful if it is complemented by a campaign to minimise the consumption of paper. There are many opportunities for reducing paper waste at home. Here are some ideas which are not exhaustive and are only meant to give rise to future ideas :

- reuse the paper which has been used on one side only for scrap paper;
- before throwing away your children's used exercise books, remove the unused pages and keep them for scrap paper; and
- send back the junk mail received and ask to be removed from junk mailing lists.