

Three-Coloured Waste Separation Bins

INTRODUCTION

Following the publication of the Waste Reduction Framework Plan in 1998, the Government commenced a programme of placing 3-coloured waste separation bins at housing estates, schools and public places to collect waste paper, aluminium cans and plastic bottles for recycling. To further enhance source recovery of recyclables, the Government rolled out a territory-wide Programme on Source Separation of Domestic Waste (SSW Programme) in January 2005 and expanded the types of recyclables recovered to include all types of waste paper, metals, plastics, old clothes, books, electrical and electronic equipment, and rechargeable batteries. The progressive developments of the waste separation programmes in Hong Kong are set out as below.

WASTE RECYCLING CAMPAIGN IN HOUSING ESTATES

2. The 3-coloured waste separation bin scheme was initiated by the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) in 1998 through the “Waste Recycling Campaign in Housing Estates” (三環奪寶新紀元). The campaign, commonly referred to as the 3R Campaign to signify “reduce, reuse and recycle”, was carried out in eight phases between 1998 and March 2005 to promote the recovery of waste paper, aluminium cans and plastic bottles. About 1,400 housing estates (equivalent to approximately 1.62 million households) joined the 3R Campaign ultimately. Under the 3R Campaign, one to two sets of 3-coloured waste separation bins, depending on the number of households, were given to each participating housing estate for free. Many housing estates also purchase additional waste separation bins on their own to further facilitate residents to participate in waste separation. Inter-estate competitions were organized, and estates were commended on the basis of the quantities of recyclables that they could recover. Apart from housing estates, the ECC also distributed 3-coloured waste separation bins to schools free of charge for promotion of waste separation at schools.



THREE-COLOURED WASTE SEPARATION BINS AT PUBLIC PLACES

3. In addition to the above programmes in housing estates and schools, 3-coloured waste separation bins are placed at public places and Government venues by a number of departments, including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Government Property Agency (GPA). Currently, there are about 28,500 3-coloured waste separation bins placed at various locations including roadside, parks, schools, sports venues, leisure and cultural facilities and Government office buildings, as well as public and private housing estates. The distribution of 3-coloured waste separation bins by location and information about the responsible parties are shown in **Annex**.

4. For the 3-coloured waste separation bins at public places, the concerned Government departments would consider any required adjustment in the number and locations of the bins based on a number of factors, including requests from the public, pedestrian flow and the actual amount of recyclables deposited in the bins. Members of the public can contact the relevant departments if they have any views on the number and locations of the 3-coloured waste separation bins at public places.

5. The FEHD currently provides maintenance and recyclable collection service through its contractor for 3-coloured waste separation bins placed at public streets and refuse collection points. The FEHD contractor also collects recyclables from parks, sports venues, and leisure and cultural facilities, which are managed by the LCSD, and country parks which are managed by the AFCD, as well as some 840 schools. The quantities of recyclables collected in the past 6 years are summarized below:

Year	Paper (tonnes)	Aluminium cans /Metal containers* (tonnes)	Plastic bottles / Plastics* (tonnes)	Total (tonnes)
2003	690	10	210	910
2004	550	20	160	730
2005	323	23	142	488
2006	518	25	94	637
2007	504	10	109	623

2008 (Jan - Oct)	426	5	84	515
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** Recyclables collected were limited to aluminium cans and plastic bottles in the early years of implementation of the 3-coloured bin scheme. Starting from May 2005 and May 2006, recyclables collected have been extended to all plastics and metal containers.*

6. Over the years, the 3-coloured waste separation bin system has served a practical need to provide receptacles for recyclables as well as a symbol to encourage people to participate in recycling.

EXPANDED TYPES OF RECYCLABLES

7. When the 3-coloured waste separation bin scheme was first rolled out, the types of recyclables collected were waste paper, aluminium cans and plastic bottles. The slogan "Blue for paper, yellow for aluminium cans and brown for plastic bottles" (藍 廢紙 ; 黃 鋁罐 ; 啡 膠樽) has gained wide community recognition.

8. To enhance the effectiveness of the 3-coloured waste separation bins located at public places, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has expanded the types of recyclables collected from the bins. From mid 2005 onwards, in addition to plastic bottles, the public can put all types of clean and dry plastic recyclables into the "brown" bins; and starting from May 2006, in addition to aluminium cans, other types of metal containers can also be placed in the "yellow" bins. A "do and don't" sticker has been put on each 3-coloured waste separation bin to remind the public on the types of recyclables collected. A new Chinese slogan "新三色, 你要識。廢紙、塑膠、金屬都合適!" was broadcasted on radio for promoting the expanded types of recyclables collected.

9. To facilitate the collection of more types of recyclables, the Government re-designed the 3-coloured waste separation bins at public places in 2005. The new design (3rd generation bin) has a larger opening on the top to facilitate the public to put in recyclables of a larger size. The old bins (1st and 2nd generation bins) were replaced progressively as they were worn out. At present, all 3-coloured waste separation bins placed at public places are of the new design.



1st generation
3-coloured bins



2nd generation
3-coloured bins



3rd generation
3-coloured bins

SSW PROGRAMME

10. In the 3R Campaign housing estates, the 3-coloured waste separation bins are usually placed at the ground floor lobby or a common area of a building, which is not particularly convenient to the residents. In view of this, EPD rolled out the SSW Programme in January 2005 to encourage and assist property management companies and resident organizations for provision of waste separation facilities on each building floor to facilitate source separation of waste by residents, as well as broaden the types of recyclables collected to all types of waste paper, plastics and metals. Participating housing estates are also encouraged to organize periodic collection programmes for collection of other types of recyclables such as old clothes, old computers, waste electronic and electrical equipment, and rechargeable batteries. Recyclables recovered from housing estates are collected by the cleansing workers of the estates and usually sold to recyclers directly. The SSW Programme has been extended to commercial and industrial buildings since October 2007. Funding from the Environment and Conservation Fund is available to subsidise the purchase of waste separation bins by the participating estates and buildings.



Stacked waste separation containers
are placed in the floor refuse room.



Separate trays are placed on a
shelf in the floor refuse room.



Stacked waste separation containers are placed at the staircase landing on each floor.



Stacked waste separation containers are placed in the service lift lobby on each floor.

EEC'S CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT THE SSW PROGRAMME AND WASTE RECYCLING AT SCHOOLS

11. The old generation of 3-coloured waste separation bins with small openings are mostly worn-out and are no longer suitable for the current mode of waste separation since the types of recyclables collected have been expanded to cover all types of waste paper, metals and plastics. Therefore, the ECC has engaged a contractor to produce newly designed waste separation bins for free distribution to housing estates under a promotional programme to be launched in late 2008. Housing estates wishing to get the new bins would need to sign up to the SSW Programme. With provision of more free bins, waste separation in the SSW estates would be enhanced.



200-litre plastic waste separation bin for outdoor use



Metal waste separation bin (with 3 x 50-litre compartments) for indoor ground floor lobby use

12. Schools would also benefit from the free distribution of the newly

designed waste separation bins. ECC has reserved 4,000 sets of plastic waste separation bins for schools and an invitation for application was sent out to all primary and secondary schools in November 2008. To further enhance waste recycling in schools, ECC has commissioned a study to be conducted from mid January to July 2009 to examine the effectiveness of waste separation at source by placing waste separation bins on each floor in schools. All past winners of the Hong Kong Green School Award have been invited to join this study. The data collected and comments from these schools will form good references for promoting waste recycling in schools.

Waste Reduction and EcoPark Group
Environmental Protection Department
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Distribution of Waste Separation Bins

Location	Number of waste separation bins	Management body	Party responsible for collecting recyclables
Public places, roadsides, refuse collection points	2,600	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)	FEHD's contractor
Parks, sports venues, leisure and cultural facilities	2,150	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	FEHD's contractor
Country Parks	1,900 (including waste separation bins for collection of aluminium cans, plastic bottles and barbecue forks)	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	FEHD's contractor
Schools	3,090		Recyclables of 840 schools are collected by FEHD's contractor and the remaining are collected by cleansing service contractors of the respective schools
Public housing estates and government quarters	8,830	Housing Department, Hong Kong Housing Authority, Government Property Agency	Cleansing service contractors of the respective estates/hostels

Private housing estates	9,520 #	Property management companies	Cleansing service contractors of the respective estates
Government office buildings, hospitals and clinics	410	Government Property Agency, Hospital Authority	Cleansing service contractors of the respective buildings, hospitals and clinics
Total	28,500		

excluding the recycling bins provided by the property management companies of the private housing estates