

Code of Practice on the Operation of Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs)



環境保護署
Environmental Protection Department



運輸署
Transport Department



ECMA
Environmental Contractors
Management Association
環保工程商會

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Preface

This Code of Practice is compiled by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in collaboration with relevant government departments and the trade (e.g. Environmental Contractors Management Association (ECMA)). It aims to provide general guidelines in respect of environmental hygiene and safety for the waste disposal trade and practitioners to observe, with a view to abating the nuisances caused by refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) ^{Note¹} to the environment and community during their operation. The Code of Practice also raises environmental hygiene and safety awareness among the waste disposal operators in operating RCVs, thus enhancing the overall performance standard of the trade.

This Code of Practice is issued for guidance only and may not be applicable in all situations. It is not intended to relieve those engaged in waste disposal operations of their responsibilities to ensure that such operations are carried out in a safe and environmentally hygienic manner. The waste disposal operations shall comply with all relevant current statutory provisions under the Laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Note:

1 Refuse collection vehicle with a rear compactor for compaction of collected refuse.

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Environmental Hygiene

1. Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs)

- 1.1 In procuring new RCVs, a waste disposal operator should purchase fully-enclosed RCVs equipped with metal tailgate cover and waste water tank/sump tank.
- 1.2 If the waste disposal operator has no plan to replace the existing open-type RCVs with fully-enclosed ones in the near future, then he should retrofit them with:-
 - a) a non-reflective metal tailgate cover to mitigate odour spread; and
 - b) a waste water tank/sump tank of suitable capacity which is made of corrosion-resistant materials to collect and temporarily store leachate.
- 1.3 The waste disposal operator should inspect the rubber seal (if any) between the tailgate and the vehicle body as well as the rubber seal of the cover/door of waste water tank/sump tank on a regular basis to ensure that the seals are properly secured and in good condition. If any irregularities of the rubber seal are observed, the waste disposal operator should arrange for an inspection, repair or replacement immediately to avoid polluting the environment.
- 1.4 The waste disposal operator must purchase fuel from legal oil suppliers for use. The use of illegal fuel could possibly damage vehicle parts and also produce excessive emissions and pollute the environment. Furthermore, it is an offence in law to purchase or use illegal fuel. Offenders will be liable to penalty upon conviction.

2. Parking of RCVs

- 2.1 The RCV driver shall not park the vehicle in any restricted zone or on the pavement obstructing traffic and affecting road safety. Moreover, he should, as far as practicable, park the vehicle in parking places or car parks far away from residential buildings to avoid causing nuisance to the nearby residents.
- 2.2 A RCV loaded with waste should not be parked in public car parks or nearby premises. Instead, it should go straight to the designated disposal facilities (e.g. refuse transfer stations, landfills.) for unloading waste and discharging the leachate. Any person who pollutes the environment as a result of spattering of leachate and waste from a RCV may be liable to penalty upon conviction.

3. Collection of Waste

- 3.1 The waste disposal operator should, as far as practicable, load the RCV with wet waste cautiously in order to prevent any overflowing and spattering of leachate.
- 3.2 If a waste collection point is equipped with a ventilation system, a RCV should be parked at a proper location to ensure that the odour spread from the RCV can be extracted effectively by the ventilation system.

- 3.3 No waste should be left in the uncovered hopper of RCV. Waste should be properly compressed and stored inside the RCV. After collecting the waste at a waste collection point, the ground of the waste collection point should be properly cleaned to maintain environmental hygiene and the rear loading compartment should be properly covered to mitigate odour spread.
- 3.4 When transporting waste, the RCV driver/operator should ensure the drain valve of the waste water tank/sump tank, the compacting device and the metal tailgate cover (if installed) are in the "Close" position so as to avoid spreading of odour, spattering of leachate and dropping of waste from the RCV during transportation. Furthermore, waste and leachate carried by RCVs shall be dumped and discharged only at the proper disposal facilities. Discharging leachate to gully and flytipping of waste including construction waste are offences in law. Offenders will be liable to penalty upon conviction.
- 3.5 Any waste disposal operator without bearing a proper licence issued by EPD under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354) shall not collect chemical/clinical waste.
- 3.6 Any waste disposal operator without bearing a valid chit issued under the Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme shall not collect construction waste.

4. Cleansing of RCVs

- 4.1 The waste disposal operator should keep the RCV in a clean and hygienic condition. Apart from daily cleansing the RCV after collection of refuse, disinfectants should be applied to the RCV wheels, chassis, loading compartments, etc.
- 4.2 The RCV driver/operator should clear any waste residues left in the waste water tank/sump tank of the RCV at the designated disposal facilities after unloading waste. Besides, he should ensure that the tailgate and vehicle body are securely attached together and the tailgate cover(if installed) is closed before the RVC leaves the designated disposal facilities.
- 4.3 Before leaving the designated disposal facilities, the RCV driver/operator should make use of the cleansing facilities provided therein to wash the tyres and body of the RCV.

Operational Safety

5. Road Safety

- 5.1 The RCV driver shall comply with the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) and its subsidiary regulations.
- 5.2 The RCV driver shall observe the speed limit designated on any road section and, where applicable, the allowable maximum speed for medium/heavy goods vehicles (e.g. 70 km/hr on expressways). In order to prevent traffic accident and spattering of

leachate from a RCV, he should:-

- a) maintain the correct stopping distance from the vehicle in front; and
- b) avoid making turns at a high speed and braking the vehicle abruptly.

- 5.3 The RCV driver should perform a regular check of the vehicle before starting work and ensure that:-
 - a) the RCV tyres are inflated to proper pressure and free from any damage;
 - b) the RCV lamps and directional indicators are operative and clean;
 - c) the RCV windows and rear-view mirrors are clean; and
 - d) there are sufficient levels of fuel, brake fluid, motor oil and coolant for operation.
- 5.4 The RCV driver/operator should not hang out rubbish containers, operating tools (e.g. brooms, spades, rubber boots and gloves) and miscellaneous items outside the vehicle body to pose a danger to traffic.
- 5.5 The waste disposal operator should arrange for regular inspection, maintenance and repair of the RCV in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations to ensure that the RCV is in order. If any irregularities of the RCV are found, the operator should have his vehicle inspected and repaired immediately.
- 5.6 Appropriate warning/signal lights, signs and retro-reflective aids shall be installed at the rear of the RCV. When the RCV is in the course of collecting waste on the road, its warning/signal lights must be switched on to remind other road users to prevent traffic accidents.
- 5.7 The RCV should be equipped with reversing devices (e.g. reversing video device) and reversing alarm devices to assist reversing. Such devices not only facilitate the driver in detecting condition at the rear of the vehicle when reversing, but also give an alarm to pedestrians and other drivers to avoid accidents. If the driver is not clear about the situation behind the vehicle in particular "blind spots", he should engage another person to guide him when reversing.
- 5.8 The RCV shall not be overloaded. Overloading can affect the performance and handling of the vehicle including steering and braking, thereby endangering the safety of RCV drivers, pedestrians and other drivers.
- 5.9 The waste disposal operator should conduct a risk assessment to identify all potential hazards on road safety aspects associated with refuse collection operations (e.g. during driving, parking, reversing, loading and unloading, etc) so as to enhance safety of other road users, in particular at road section with limited space and gradient for manoeuvring. The level of the risks associated with each hazard should be properly assessed and documented. After the results of risk assessment, safe precautions should be devised for elimination or reduction of the risks.

6. Occupational Safety

- 6.1 The waste disposal operator shall comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509) to protect the safety and health of his staff.

- 6.2 A safe system of work for refuse collection operations should be established and documented.
- 6.3 The waste disposal operator should conduct a risk assessment to identify all potential hazards associated with refuse collection operations (e.g. use of machines and manual handling operation of waste/materials) at different workplaces (e.g. refuse collection points, refuse transfer stations, landfills.). The level of the risks associated with each hazard should be properly assessed and documented. After recording the results of risk assessment, safe precautions should be devised for elimination or reduction of the risks.
- 6.4 All refuse collection operations should be planned to ensure that they are carried out safely and that all foreseeable risks have been taken into account. In determining and formulating safety precautions, particular attention should be paid to safe working procedures including vehicle reversing procedures, traffic arrangements at workplaces, operation procedures of the waste container lifting device, the use of personal protective equipment, etc. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of drivers, workers, supervisors and managers are properly defined.
- 6.5 Before implementing a safe system of work, the waste disposal operator should ensure all managers, supervisors, workers and drivers are fully aware of the potential hazards, safety precautions to be adopted and their roles to play by providing sufficient information, codes of practice, instructions, training and supervision.
- 6.6 The waste disposal operator should monitor the effectiveness of safety precautions by designating supervisors or safety officers to conduct regular inspection to ensure the safety precautions are properly implemented and suit the needs of the work or the changes of working environment.
- 6.7 The waste disposal operator should take appropriate safety measures to protect the RCV driver/operator in severe weather such as rainstorm, thunderstorm or lightning.
- 6.8 To ensure occupational safety, the waste disposal operator should provide the necessary personal protective equipments (PPE) such as protective clothes, skid-resistant safety shoes, protective gloves, reflective vest, mask, safety goggles and ear protectors for RCV driver/operator's use.
- 6.9 The waste disposal operator should arrange for his employees to have regular safety training in which day-to-day operational problems can be discussed and resolved through learning and experience sharing.
- 6.10 The waste disposal operator should always perform a regular check on the vehicle itself including the compacting device, waste container lifting device and all associated safety devices to ensure they are in order. If any irregularities are found by RCV driver/operator, he should stop operating the vehicle and arrange for proper repairs.

- 6.11 The RCV driver should not leave the RCV unattended while its engine is running.
- 6.12 The RCV driver/operator should be conscious of the surroundings (e.g. stairs, slope or unsmooth surface) and cautious when pushing the waste containers so as to prevent the waste containers from overturning.
- 6.13 The RCV driver/operator should stay in a safe position and monitor the surroundings when a waste container lifting device is operated. Where possible, suitable walkways for pedestrians, physically segregated from operating areas should be provided. In addition, if there is more than one operator, an effective communication arrangement should be established among operators for the operation of lifting device so as to prevent any danger arising from misunderstanding in communication.
- 6.14 The RCV driver/operator should not overload the waste container lifting device. He should ensure that the waste container is securely held by the waste container lifting device before operating so as to prevent it from falling during operation.
- 6.15 The RCV driver/operator should follow the established safety precautions in case of malfunction of the compacting device and loading compartment, waste container falling into the loading compartment or hanging in mid-air, etc. Under no circumstances should the RCV driver/operator try to fix the malfunction by entering the loading compartment, thereby endangering himself.
- 6.16 The RCV driver/operator should park and operate the RCV in a safe environment. He should maintain a safe distance from live overhead electricity cables, holes, depressions and other hazards. Moreover, he should, as far as practicable, avoid operating the RCV on a slope, reversing the RCV into a narrow alley, parking or operating in a small space.
- 6.17 When operating at the designated disposal facilities (e.g. refuse transfer stations, landfills), the RCV driver/operator should follow the instructions of contractors of the designated disposal facilities. Particular attention should be paid to other vehicles operating in the vicinity to prevent accidents.

Others

7. Identification of Waste Disposal Operator

The waste disposal operator should ensure that an identification label is conspicuously displayed on the body or window of his RCV indicating clearly his name and contact information in order to facilitate members of the public in offering comments; making enquiries or lodging complaints and for follow-up actions to be taken by the operator concerned.

8. Enquiry

If you have any queries on this Code of Practice in respect of environmental protection, environmental hygiene, road safety and occupational safety, please contact the following respective government departments:-

<u>Category</u>	<u>Name of government department</u>	<u>Enquiry telephone number</u>	<u>Website</u>
Environmental Protection	Environmental Protection Department	2838 3111	www.epd.gov.hk
Environmental Hygiene	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	1823	www.fehd.gov.hk
Road Safety	Transport Department	1823	www.td.gov.hk
Occupational Safety	Labour Department	2559 2297	www.labour.gov.hk